

# GRAFTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

*Disciples of Christ*

1834 - 1984



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FOREWORD

This brief history of Grafton Christian Church has been compiled by members of the Campbell Bible Class, as a contribution to the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Church.

The material in quotes is taken verbatim from the official minutes of the Grafton Christian Church unless another source is indicated by footnotes.

Most of the material pertaining to deeds and surveys of church property was given by Mr. Omar White. The map of the church property, which has been used as a centerfold, was drawn up by Mr. White.

A file has been established by the Campbell Bible Class of all documents referred to in this history that were not a part of the official records.

The cover design was done by Mr. Roland Rollins.

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The desire to find a better way, that had brought their ancestors to a new world, continued to grow among the early Virginians. They not only desired political freedom but religious freedom as well. The Church of England no longer met their needs and they began to seek a way of worship where men and the trappings of religion were unimportant, where God was restored to His rightful place as Master.

Among the early groups who sought to find this freedom were the Baptists. The following request was presented to the Virginia Convention in session in Williamsburg on June 20, 1776: "Baptists in Prince William County petitioned the Virginia Convention for the freedom to worship in their own way, maintain their own ministers and no others, and that they be allowed to marry, 'be buried and the like' without paying the Clergy of other denominations. Granted these privileges, the signers promised to unite with the others in the common cause."<sup>1</sup>

As the Baptist and similar organized movements grew in the new nation there arose within their ranks other voices seeking a type of Christianity more in harmony with the character of the nation, one that was individualistic, uncomplicated, free of human authority and unhampered by traditions. Among these reformers was Alexander Campbell, a scholarly Scotch-Irish minister of the Presbyterian faith, who came to America in 1807. He came with the impulse to bring about change and found fertile ground in the frontier environment. The famous "Declaration and Address" released on September 7, 1809 contained the thirteen propositions destined to become the foundation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Most widely proclaimed of

<sup>1</sup> "National Park Service Bicentennial Daybook", 1976.

these was the first: "That the church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one."

A similar move toward reformation had begun in Kentucky at a revival at Cane Ridge in 1801. Barton W. Stone, another Presbyterian minister, voiced his dissatisfaction through a landmark document, "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery". The name Christian evolved from his work.

On January 1, 1832 the movements of Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone were united. "Disciples and Christians launched the delicate process of becoming one. They found common ground in rejecting human creeds, accepting the centrality of Christ in their faith, recognizing the supreme authority of scripture, and proclaiming their mutual desire for union."<sup>2</sup>

In Grafton the Baptist Church was growing fast. The records of the Dover Association, the organization of Baptist Churches on the Peninsula, of which Grafton was a member, showed a membership of 409 in 1809. This growing congregation acquired a new pastor in 1827, a Scotsman, Peter Ainslie. He became greatly interested in the teachings of Alexander Campbell. When those who "read the publications of Alexander Campbell or want to hear those preach who favor the views taught by him" were banned from the association by the "Dover Decrees", Ainslie was among those so removed.

Members followed Ainslie's lead and "In a session May 11, 1834 they voted to support him in 'a solemn protest against the Decrees'". They voted to organize their own church. When Ainslie announced at the same meeting that he would soon leave the church to become

<sup>2</sup> "A Handbook for Today's Disciples" by D. Duane Cummins, pg 11.

the first general evangelist in Tidewater, Kemp P. Elliott, his assistant, was named pastor. Thus Grafton Christian Church was born.

### 1834

May 11 - "The Congregation of Jesus Christ at Grafton in York County was organized the eleventh day of May 1834. It was composed of the following persons" -

<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Kemp P. Elliott, Pastor	Letitia Boswell
John Curtis	Emily Sheild
Frederick B. Power	Virginia Curtis
Wm. Gilliam	Elizabeth Powell
Samuel Sheild	Maria Shield
Thomas Minson	Elizabeth Elliott
Churchill Boswell	Mary Minson
Lewis Hansford	Ann Chapman
Edw. Burcher	Anne Jordan
Allan Chapman	Elizabeth Curtis
Joseph R. Nottingham	Lucy Power
Wm. Burcher	Elizabeth Nottingham
John Belvin	Mary Powell
Wm. C. Powell	Zana Hansford
John T. Hall	Mary Garrett
Thos. Wynne	Elizabeth Wright
Thos. Hogg	Maria Hogg
Thos. Hansford	Sarah Hogg
John Garrett	Frances Hogg
Zachariah Hogg	Sarah Hogg
John Hogg, Sr.	Mary Hogg
John Hogg, Jr.	Mary Ratcliffe
Wm. Hogg, Sr.	Elizabeth Howard
Wm. Hogg, Jr.	Mahala Elliott
Lewis Hogg, Jr.	
Bernard Elliott	

May 11 - "All of these persons had been previously members of a church by the same name at the same place, & several had withdrawn; those remaining being determined not to submit to what, among the Baptist Churches was known as the 'Dover decrees' having for their object the exclusion of all who read the publications of Alexander Campbell or want to hear those preach who favor the views taught by him; those above named also being unwilling to submit to human creeds as a bond of union have formed themselves into a separate Church with a view of keeping all the ordinances as delivered by the Apostles - In coming together said Congregation, having already been immersed upon a confession of faith in the Mesiah as the only begotten son of God they declare it to be their full purpose and determination to acknowledge no Leader but Christ, no infallible Teachers but the apostles and prophets and no articles of belief but the old and new testaments; and the latter as containing their faith and the Rules of their Behavior as Christians."

The old Meeting House being in a state of disrepair and probably not available to the dissenting parishioners on amicable terms, the leaders decided on the construction of a new Sanctuary, and cast about for a suitable site. They had not far to look! John Curtis owned a field directly across the road from the Old Meeting House and agreed to make a part of it available for the building project. One of the Congregation was a brick mason by trade. He had long had his eye on a clay outcrop about 100 yards south of the road and promptly set up his screens, mixing pans and kiln to make bricks for a really sumptuous House of the Lord.

As such projects often do, the preliminary arrangements were a bit informal and ground was broken and foundation laid before someone decided

that the Congregation should not be erecting a permanent structure on John Curtis' land, that they should have legal title to the new building site. Sam Sheild, one of the Congregation, was Clerk of the York County Court and agreed to draw up the needed document.

July 9 - Deed clearly states "a lot or parcel of land . . . directly in front of the Old Baptist Meeting House called Grafton on the South side of the road leading west from the main stage road and bounded on the north by that road, commencing at a red oak on the side thereof and running to another red oak on the side of the same road in a line with the first, distant therefrom about 20 or 21 yards in a straight direction 53 yards to the west, thence south 35 yards, thence east 53 yards and thence north 35 yards to the oak at the beginning, containing as supposed about half an acre more or less . . ."

The Congregation "having contracted for and commenced building a house of worship on the land so given have appointed said Thomas Minson, James Belvin, Lewis Moreland and William B. Gray as Trustees to receive title to the same . . ."

The intent was certainly a free gift of the land to the Church, but someone, mindful of the custom of including some valuable consideration in any transaction, dug into his savings for "one Spanish milled dollar to the said John Curtis in hand paid at or before the sealing and delivering of these presents, the receipt whereof, he doth hereby acknowledge . . ."

Oct. 19 - "Brethren F. B. Power, Thomas Minson, Thos. Wynne, Allen Chapman, Samuel Sheild were appointed a committee to make sale of

the old Grafton Church & they are requested to notify to all having just claims upon it to present them on the day of sale, they being authorized to adjust such claims as to them may seem just."

The church apparently had the responsibility for disposing of the old property. Claims must have been presented to this committee for in the margin the following note had been penned in "28 Nov. '34, \$44.00 pd to John Tabb, JAC \$44.50 = \$88.50."

The following resolutions were drawn up by Grafton Christian Church the same year it was organized: "Regarding all Protestant Sects, as building upon human creeds, and in many instances making void the word of God by their traditions; and being resolved to stand perfect in the knowledge and practice of the revealed will of God; also regarding the church, as built only on the foundation of the apostles and prophets--Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; and it being the duty of the church to preserve the unity of the spirit by the bond of peace--there being but one body and one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all, they declare before God, and to each other that they are determined to do the whole will of God, as far as they can understand it--to bear with one another when they may differ on matters of opinion--to be ever valiant for the truth--and to walk in obedience to the Lord alone, as their prophet, priest and king. Thus giving themselves to the Lord and to one another according to the will of God, they have agreed to walk together as members of the family of God, under the government of the Prince of Peace, to whom be honor everlasting. Amen."

### 1835

Aug. 21 - The previous section expunged by the church.

On later consideration the members decided that such resolutions were not in harmony with scriptural teaching and in reality were another "man made" creed. Based on their determination to make the revealed will of God their only guide, the above action was taken.

Dec. 25 - "A protracted meeting commenced this day and was concluded on 30th - during which from the able and fervently judicious ministrations of our beloved Brother Henshall, 26 were added to the congregation and were baptized forthwith."

The early congregation began to grow and to assume their responsibility to help spread the word of God by support of evangelistic work.

### 1836

March 27 - Members pledge financial support to the work of Bro. Henley.

The death of their first pastor saddened the congregation. They observed a period of mourning but then proceeded to look again at the organization of their beloved church. In the spring they elected their new officers but made it quite clear that no man was to be elevated above his brothers, only Christ could be the leader of the church; therefore, the term pastor was replaced with Elder and the Elder of the congregation was chosen.

1837

Nov. 26 - "It was announced before the congregation that it having pleased the great Disposer of Events, to take from us our much beloved & lamented Pastor Brother Kemp P. Elliott on Thursday morning last the 23 inst., after a short indisposition, at which time, he fell suddenly dead whilst sitting in his chair reading." It was further stated that a 3 months period of mourning should be observed, the male members wearing crepe on the left arm and the females dressing their bonnets with black riband.

1838

April 22 - "It being proposed and seconded that in consequence of the death of our beloved Brother Elliott, the congregation should proceed to the election of its officers, according to the Scriptures, a plurality of Elders being thereby required, the Congregation determined that the words 'assistant Pastor' affixed to our Brother John Curtis's name, be expunged from the Church Book, as unscriptural, that the word 'Elder' be substituted therefor; and he is unanimously chosen & hereby declared to be the Elder of the congregation." Three additional deacons elected at this same meeting.

It took five years for the deed drawn in 1834 to be registered. It is important to note that even in the beginning stages of the congregation the rights of women were being recognized, at least by the early courts.

1839

April 18 - "The church appointed Bretheren as Trustees for the Congregation to receive from

Bro. John Curtis a deed for the piece of land given by him on which our house is erected."

July 9 - "Virginia Curtis, the wife of John Curtis appeared before" Justices of the Peace John R. West and William Tabb "and being examined by us privily and apart from her said husband and having the deed aforesaid fully explained to her, she, the said Virginia Curtis, acknowledged the same to be her act and deed and declared that she had freely and voluntarily, without the persuasions and threats of her said husband, signed, sealed and delivered the same, and that she wishes not to retract it, and consented that the said deed should be recorded in the said County of York", which was accordingly so done.

1842

June 26th - "Bro Sheild, clerk of the congregation having been for some time in ill health and therefor not being regularly attendant at meeting, H. H. Wynne was appointed clerk in his stead."

1843

April 16 - "The following Preamble and resolution being presented by H. H. Wynne and seconded by John Curtis were unanimously adopted.

It having pleased the great Dispenser of events, in his providence, to take from us our beloved brother and Elder Dr. F. B. Power on Wednesday 29th inst. after a lingering disease which he bore with Christian fortitude and resignation - He fell asleep in Christ fully assured of a glorious resurrection - Resolved that we, his brethern and Sisters of Grafton, feel deeply and inexpressibly the

loss, we have sustained. We sympathize with his distressed consort - and family - and as a testimonial we propose wearing the usual badges of mourning for three months from his decease."

The idea of non-involvement was not a concept of Grafton Christian Church ten years after its organization. The problems and concerns of the members made up a great deal of the business reported in the minutes. The people apparently cared deeply for their brothers and sisters in the faith, and the Elders felt great responsibility for maintaining harmonious relationships within the church.

June 4th - "A very unfortunate difficulty between Brother Blank and wife and Sister Blank having come to the knowledge of the church, Brethren Thomas Wynne and H. H. Wynne were appointed a committee to endeavor to bring said Brother and Sisters to a Christian reconciliation."

July 9th - "The above committee having failed to settle said difficulty and reported the same to the church - it was proposed that the Elders go as private friends and endeavor to settle it. To which they agreed and going to York next day - at which time the matter was happily and satisfactorily adjusted."

The young congregation felt it necessary to again come to an agreement on the manner in which the church should be organized. No single man was in control and all members were expected to be involved in the life of the church.

1844

March 30 - "According to notice given Lord's day previously (24th Inst.) The Brethren met Saturday 30th to come to an understanding & unanimity on several matters - viz.

- 1st It was unanimously resolved that the Elders shall rule according to God's word.
- 2nd Resolved that Committees appointed, refusing to act, shall be amenable to the congregation.
- 3rd The contribution being considered a separate act of worship, it was agreed as more expedient that small boxes be passed to receive said contribution.
- 4th On motion of Bro. Wm. Tabb, it was resolved that something be done with regard to many brethren who 'neglect the assembling of themselves together' and it was thought proper to send Brethren (in the name of the church) to wait on some of the most delinquent."

The church became a viable influence in the community and in the state. Ideas and suggestions began to flow between various Disciples groups.

July 25th - Much business before the church:

1. Congregation notified to meet early the next Lord's day to select two additional Elders.
2. Christopher Tompkins and H. H. Wynne appointed to wait on Sister Blank for unchristian conduct in York on Court day (committee unable to act - new one appointed in March).
3. Application made by Bro. Blank for a letter of dismission since he was moving away - not granted because a rumor was

afloat that he had engaged in intemperance.  
(This charge was cleared and a letter of commendation granted on March 3rd.)

4. Letter to be written to the Matthews Brethren declining to support Bro. Dangerfield, an Evangelist.
5. Dr. F. W. Power and H. H. Wynne directed to write to the Brethren of Fredricksburg who oppose Dr. Thomas.

Debates, discussions, agreements, exploration of ideas were all a part of the growth of religious awareness in this era. Many ecumenical meetings, conferences and occasionally confrontations were taking place. Grafton Christian Church was involved - deeply involved.

Oct. 27 - "Brethren John Curtis, Thomas Wynne, Wm. Tabb & H. H. Wynne were appointed to represent the Congregation in the Cooperation which is to take place at our Meeting House on the 8th day of Nov. next."

Oct. 29 - "Our beloved Elder John Curtis who has labored with us in word and doctrine for many years with untiring zeal and devotion departed this life in Grafton Meeting House Oct. 29th, 1844 a few minutes before noon. He was there for the purpose of discussing some religious differences with Mr. Williams, a Methodist - in a friendly & courteous manner. He complained when he commenced of a pain in his stomach, which increased and after speaking about half an hour, he gave way and set down, fell and in a few minutes expired.

His Brethren and Sisters of Grafton agree as a testimony of their love and sympathy and as a tribute for his worth, considering their great loss but confident of his gain, to wear crape for thirty days from his decease."

Despite the congregation's loss the ecumenical work underway was to continue.

Nov. 3 - "Bro. S. Sheild appointed to represent us in the Cooperation in the place of Bro. Curtis."

1848

The church grew steadily and the following enrollment count is found Oct 1st 1848:

	<u>Whites</u>
Females	81
Males	<u>51</u>
	132
Colored	<u>13</u>
	145
Error	<u>2</u>
	143

As the membership grew so did the problems - typical of the recorded business of the church we find the following:

Brother H - fighting - refused to stand rebuke - excluded.

Bro. P - intoxicated in York at March Court - acknowledged himself under the influence of ardent spirits, not from the quantity taken but some other cause - being penitent he was mildly rebuked and restored to fellowship.

Brother H - fighting - did not respond to "earnest entreaty and exhortation" - excluded.

Brother B - used profane language - rebuked and restored.

Brother M - too frequently under the influence of ardent spirit - kindly and warmly talked to by the Elders, "not being willing to submit to the usual practice of discipline of the Church of Christ, of being rebuked was excluded June 1850 (restored)".

1852

Jan. 30 - Meeting called to attend to the order and discipline of the church and for mutual consultation. The following resolutions were passed:

- 1st Public worship on the first day of each week should commence precisely at 11:00 from October 1 to May 1 and from May 1 to October 1 they were to begin at 10:30, to dismiss at 1:00.
- 2nd The presiding Elder on occasion will call on some Brother to read a portion of scripture from the New and Old Testament.
- 3rd A committee of three will be appointed to call on any member who absents himself or herself from Church three Lord's day in succession.
- 4th Committee appointed to examine church and report on needed repairs. (As a result of the report a contract was entered into for the amount of \$350 and a treasurer appointed to receive the subscriptions of the Brethren and pay the bills.)

One can only assume that the work was accomplished. The old records are mute on the completion of the plans. There is just one other notation in the records of activities prior to the Civil War. On April 6th, just six days before the firing on Fort Sumter the Church still struggled to keep its organization viable.

Membership in the church in 1843 and updated in 1856 included several colored slaves listed below:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Names of Owners</u>	<u>Year Baptized</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Jack	G. Harwood	1835	
Tom	A. Chapman	1836	had to sell
Frank Reed	F.B. Power Est.		from Baptist
Bill	J.C. Moreland	1856	drowned June 5
Jack Moore	Wm. Gilliam		
Caecelia	F. B. Power	1841	
Hanna	" "	1841	
Anne	Jno. Minson	1841	
Patty	Jos.R. Nottingham	1843	
Jane	F.B. Power Est.	1846	sold
Susan dead	A. Chapman	1846	Never had the
Catharine	" "	1846	right hand of
Kate	" "	1846	Fellowship
Fanny	K.P. Elliott Est.	1845	sold away
Phillis	E. T. Wynne	1845	
Eliza	" "	1845	
Suby	" "		
Peggy	H. H. Wynne	1845	
Nancy	James Belvin	1852	excluded 1856
Sukie	Throckmorton		restored 1857
Patience	Elliott	1835	
Delia	F. D. Power	1841	
Anna R.			
Anne	H. Wynne		

1861

April 6 - "At a meeting of the Bretheren April 6th, 1861, called for the purpose of attending to the order, discipline and other business necessary for the advancement and spiritual growth of the Church Brother W. A. Ware was chosen clerk of the Congregation & the following Bretheren were unanimously elected to fill the offices of the church, E. T. Wynne Elder, W. B. Gray, Kemp E. Minson, W. Tennis, Lewis Burcher, Samuel Chapman and Wm. A. Ware, Deacons.

William A. Ware, Clerk"

Little is recorded from then until 1881. A record of a few baptisms and deaths exists but this was a period of great stress and sadness for what should have been a growing church. The church, like the nation, was caught in the grips of a struggle that would drastically change Grafton Christian Church and the rest of the nation.

"The Confederate Army used Grafton Church building as a hospital for their sick and wounded soldiers. Some present members of the church remember stories told them by their parents or grandparents about their taking or sending food to the sick and dying soldiers. Mrs. Nettie Sparks, now deceased, a lifelong member at Grafton, remembered the story her father often told about taking soup to his father, who was a patient at the hospital.

A number of soldiers are buried in the old church cemetery which almost surrounds the church building. Practically all of these are in unmarked graves. Frequently when graves are dug today in the old cemetery, buttons from uniforms are found.

In 1862 the Union Army got control of the church. Their plans were to tear the building down and use the materials in it to construct their winter quarters. A committee of zealous church members was successful in persuading the Federals to let the building stand. However, they did cut the floor and part of the walls and used the building as a stable for their horses.

The old records state that in 1865 gradually the members began to 'build up their waste places of Zion'. Their building was a ruin. Most of the members were impoverished. Many had moved away, and others had been slain in battle. Faithful remaining members, among them, Dr. R. H. Power, William Gray, Chidley Wade, Humphrey Wynne, and William Tennis were instrumental in restoring the church for worship. They scattered pine straw over the dirt floor. Logs with boards laid across them served as church pews. The church Bible rested on a board lying on the top of an upturned log which served as the pulpit stand."<sup>3</sup>

As the church began to rebuild attempts to reorganize took place and a new elder named and employed to preach.

1881

March 23 - Bro. W. C. Wade made an elder of the church and employed to preach. Deacons given responsibility to take up a subscription from every member of the church.

Nov. 13 - The work of the women in the church took a vibrant step forward on that fall afternoon.

<sup>3</sup> "History of Grafton Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, 1834-1874" by Myrtle Phillips Amory, pg 25 and 26.

They had actively supported the men in their work but on this date they formed their own missionary society which became a source of strength and support in both home and foreign missions.

The first meeting was called to order by Dr. R. H. Power. Following a devotional service the following officers were elected: President, Mrs. D. B. Power; Vice President, Mrs. M. E. C. Wynne; Treasurer, Mrs. M. E. Minson; Asst. Treasurer, Miss Nettie Gray; Secretary, Lucy N. Power; and Asst. Secretary, Mrs. Nannie W. Lee. (For some unknown reason, Miss Gray did not serve and at the December 1st meeting Mrs. Ann Cary Wade was elected to take her place.)

The work of rebuilding and restoring the church continued. Efforts were made to contact and return to fellowship the members, many of whom had become financially impoverished and emotionally drained during the years of turmoil.

#### 1885

April 13 - "At a meeting held at Grafton Church April 13th, 1885 the following business was transacted. On motion of Brother H. H. Wynne, R. L. Davis was unanimously chosen Treasurer and elected a Deacon. On motion, Willie Wynne was unanimously elected a Deacon. On motion of Bro. H. H. Wynne, Bro. E. Waldrop and others of his own selection were to visit those of the church that were reported not to be walking in conformity with the rules of the church."

Legal responsibilities of the congregation again came to the foreground and new trustees were named.

#### 1887

April 1 - "By an order of the Circuit Court of York County entered April 1st, 1887 James C. Wynne, Miles Burcher, Robert H. Power, R. Lee Davis and Joseph B. Hogge were appointed Trustees for the Church of Christians or Disciples of Christ at Grafton York County."

As the church renewed its place in the life of the community, it came to reflect the concerns of the society of the South, a society left suspicious, vulnerable and ultra-sensitive by the end of the Civil War. The new laws and a new social environment foreign to the minds and hearts of the people had been established. It appears that from this micro cosmos of Southern thought there arose another major conflict in the life of the church.

#### 1890

March 28 - "At a meeting held at Grafton Church, York County Va. on the 28th day of March, 1890. The meeting was called to order by Bro. H. H. Wynne, Elder, and opened by reading of the scriptures and prayer by the same, and on motion Bro. K. E. Minson was chosen Chr. pro tem. in the absence of the clerk, after which on motion of Bro. W. C. Wade, the charges brought against him were read."

May 2 - "At a meeting held at Grafton Church, York County Va. on the 2nd day of May 1890. The meeting was called to order by Bro. W. C. Wade, and on his motion, Bro. Geo. F. McGee, Pastor, was chosen chairman of the meeting. After the reading a chapter of the Scripture and prayer by Bro. W. C. Wade, the meeting proceeded to business. On the motion of

Bro. W. C. Wade, he thought it best, that the Bros. Blank should be seen and talked with as they have absented themselves from the Church & are keeping bad company. On the motion of Bro. C. Wade, a committee composed of J. H. Wynne and W. C. Wade, was appointed to go to see the Bros. Blank and wait on them.

It is authorized that those members that did not connect themselves with the Church after the Revision, our church or any other, The Deacons shall not pass the Lords Supper to them, nor they shall not be allowed to return Thanks or to be called on to participate in the worship held in our Church.

It is again authorized that members of this Church, requesting Letters, shall not receive them unless it is carried, before the Church, for the Church to determine whether or not the applicant is suitable to receive a letter or not. Also they shall not be given to members until they want to join some other Church.

On motion of Bro. W. C. Wade and seconded by Bro. Geo. F. McGee, Pastor, R. K. Minson was chosen Secretary Protom in the absence of the regular Secretary.

On the motion of Bro. W. C. Wade, and seconded by Bro. W. C. Burcher, that the meeting be adjourned until the next regular meeting in June."

At this time apparently the May 17th meeting was not planned but the issues against Bro. Wade made an earlier meeting necessary.

The records go on to enumerate many charges which reflected the great concern over social and political changes. The members of the congregation feared that his outside work, his political interests, his concerns for civil rights and his disagreements with members of the community had made him ineffective in the work of the church.

It is admirable that he was anxious to have these charges presented and that he be given a chance to respond.

May 17 - Based on portions of Bro. Wade's responses these charges had been circulated verbally for some time and in order to clear the air he wishes to "meet it fairly, squarely and in the face of God".

In response to most of the charges he was emphatic in his denials. He reported that he had talked with those who were said to have made some of the statements and they had denied making such statements. Rumors and misquotes had plagued Bro. Wade and he was desirous that all charges be dealt with expediently.

"Brethren, I declare myself innocent of any of these charges and consider them unworthy of ever mentioning . . . I call upon you to say between us, and to say if I am guilty of the charges and if not I want you to say so."

He was a man who did not want to mix church and state. "I scorn and spurn the idea of bringing politics into religion and religious matters but I will make this bold assertion that there is no man living who knows what ticket I voted or who I voted for and right here it has come to my

hearing that I was an offensive partisan last fall in the election. I answer that by saying it was the creation of an imaginative mind that has no foundation whatever."

He became poetic and philosophical as his defense continued, "I will say with the poet . . . he who robs me of my purse robs me only of trash but he who robs me of my pure name takes from me that which makes him no richer and leaves me a beggar.

Take this as an example, this paper is, you will say pure, while you can trace on it your ideas but here it is blotted and blurred, can you erace the blots and make it as it once was, so with the character, injure it once and it is there, again rend this in two, can you mend it? No, Then learn the lesson."

Further statements were made by Bro. Wade and he urged the church to make their decision. Open dialogue took place among all concerned and the record goes on to report that after much discussion a decision was rendered. "On motion of Bro. Thos. C. Minson a vote was taken by the church to see whether Bro. W. C. Wade was guilty of said charges. Vote being taken, all the members present with the exception of Bro. Robt. C. Wynne, say he is not guilty, and that the church hereby express their confidence in Bro. W. C. Wade." This was signed by 17 members.

Was W. C. Wade a target of prejudice and fear or was he a strong soul who had taken a stand on the rights of the individual long before society was ready to accept such a concept?

Having restored W. C. Wade to his position with the church, the past appears forgotten and growth became apparent again. New space was

needed and acquired by the Trustees of the Church. The group appointed in 1887 continued to serve with the exception of R. Lee Davis who by this time had been replaced by Thomas C. Minson. The following deed was transacted through their efforts.

#### 1891

Feb. 7 - "This Deed, made this 7th day of February in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety one between Robert H. Power and Dorothea B. Power, his wife of the first part, and Miles Burcher, James C. Wynne, Robert E. Power, Joseph B. Hogge and Thomas C. Minson, Trustees of Grafton Church, York County of the second part - Witnesseth: That in consideration of the sum of Fifteen Dollars, the said Robert H. Power and Dorothea B. Power, his wife do grant unto the said Miles Burcher, James C. Wynne, Robert E. Power, Joseph B. Hogge and Thomas C. Minson, Trustees as aforesaid with General Warranty, all that certain piece or parcel of ground, in Grafton District York County State of Virginia containing Sixty-five (65) hundredth of an acre, and bounded as follows. On the North by the main road leading from the York-Hampton Road to Grafton Church and old church yard boundary. East by the land of R. H. Power, South by R. H. Power and West by the Grafton yard and land formerly owned by John Curtis deceased. The above described piece of land being now enclosed with the original Church Yard of Grafton Church, and being a part of the land formerly owned by Christopher Curtis and purchased by the said R. H. Power under a decree in the suit of R. H. Power vs. T. M. Wood and others, and sold for a division, and is deeded to the above named Trustees and their successors in office forever.

The said R. H. Power and D. B. Power his wife covenant that they have the right to convey the said land to the grantees; that they have done no act to encumber the said land; that the grantees shall have quiet possession of the said land, free from all encumbrances, and that they, the said parties of the first part, will execute such further assurance of the said land as may be requisite. Witness the following signatures and seals.

Robt. H. Power Seal  
Dorothea B. Power Seal

State of Virginia,  
County of York, to wit:

I, Chidley Wade, Clerk of York County aforesaid in the State of Virginia, do certify that Robert H. Power and Dorothea B. Power whose names are signed to the within writing, bearing date on the 7th day of February 1891, have acknowledged the same before me in my County aforesaid.

Given under my hand this 7th day of February 1891. Chidley Wade, Clerk

Newport News, Warwick County Virginia  
February 6th 1891 Received of the Trustees of Grafton Church York County Virginia through C. Wade fifteen dollars for the purchase of a certain piece or parcel of land enclosed in said church yard supposed to be sixty five hundredth of an acre.  
Robt. B. Power"

Growth continued and a full time preacher became desirable.

Oct. 18 - "Preamble and Resolutions offered at Grafton Christian Church York Co. Va.  
Octo. 18th 1891 by W. C. Wade. Whereas

Grafton Church is without a preacher and the Great Commission given by our Captain says - Go preach and recognizing the fact that we are not doing it either directly or indirectly, and the great need of it now in our own church, therefore be it Resolved that the following named brethren be appointed a committee to correspond with a preacher or preachers with a view of employing one either through the Committee or the State Secretary J. L. Hill, and ascertain his terms and the time at his disposal and also they may correspond with a like committee from Lebanon and Olive Branch Churches with a view of cooperation if such can be had. J. B. Hogge, Dr. R. E. Power, J. C. Wynne, Miles Burcher, John T. Moreland and Frank Elliott, any three or more of whom may act and they may call to their counsels any other brethren or sisters whom they may see fit, they shall report to this church this day two weeks their progress, and

Whereas, our dearly beloved brother H. H. Wynne who has been so long an Elder in Grafton Church and now in his latter days is so sorely afflicted, therefore be it Resolved, that we express to our beloved Brother H. H. Wynne our deep and abiding sympathy in this his terrible affliction and pray the good Father may give him strength to bear it all, and that if it be the will of our Father we may have his counsel and prayers and presence yet many days, but if not, that he may be resigned to the will of the Father and that we may meet him at last at rest, in Heaven, after the toils of life are over.

Resolve, that these preambles and resolutions be spread upon the minutes of the Church and that a copy of the last be sent to our Brother H. H. Wynne.

J. B. Hogge, Clerk"

No information is contained in the records as to a follow-up of this resolution but a small sheet of looseleaf note paper has been inserted on the page officially listing the elders of the church which states:

"at the church for church purposes, It is moved by Bro. R. E. Power and seconded by Bro. Frank Elliott that the church ask Bro. Helm to continue to preach for the church for the ensuing year.

The above motion has been carried with one exception . . ."

Since these two men were on the appointed committee and the name of J. M. Helm occurs frequently on the membership list as the minister "by whom baptized" between G. F. McGee and A. J. Renforth it can be assumed that the minutes recorded above came from a meeting that followed the presentation of the resolutions of Oct. 18, 1891.

During the next few years the church records are silent but the minutes of the women's work show them busy both at home and in giving to foreign mission work. Even the men attended some of the meetings and the records indicate that frequently they offered the opening prayer.

#### 1895

May 29 - "On May 29, 1895, Miss Farrer (Mrs. Bessie Madison), who had completed her

preparation for mission work and was planning to sail for India within a few months, visited the C.W.B.M. at Grafton Church. On that occasion she organized a Junior Society, whose members called themselves 'Little Builders'. Mrs. Levin Smith was chosen as adult leader for the group. The following officers were elected: President, Ella Gray; Treasurer, Irene Elliott; Secretary, Annie Burt."<sup>4</sup>

There are no minutes provided in the church records until the following meeting is recorded, again on looseleaf paper.

#### 1907

Dec. 2 - "At a church meeting held Dec. 2nd, 1907 Scripture read by Bro. J. C. Wynne and prayer. It is agreed that Bro. A. J. Renforth will preach two Sundays in each month commencing from 1st Jan. 1908 and it is further agreed that Bro. Renforth salary shall be \$300 - a year. Mr. G. J. Curtis, J. T. Thomas are elected deacons."

Again, we must turn to records of the women's work to fill in a small part of the large gap of time when no recorded minutes exist.

1910 - "Ice cream socials continued to be popular at Grafton. In August of 1910, one was held on the lawn of Mrs. Martha Elliott. A sum of \$6.00 was cleared and it was applied to the salary of the Rev. A. J. Renforth, who was the pastor."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Amory, pg 32.

<sup>5</sup> Amory, pg 33.

The list of members and recorded dates of baptism indicate the continuing growth of the church following Mr. Renforth's employment as minister but the next entry does not occur until 1918.

1918

July 7 - "A meeting of the church membership was held July 7, 1918 with Rev. A. J. Renforth pastor acting as chairman. It was moved and seconded that at this time such officers of the church be elected as the church sees fit which motion was sustained, whereupon Bro. W. L. Nottingham was nominated and elected clerk. Bros. J. F. Thomas and Gill C. Cluverius was nominated and elected Elders, Bros. L. B. Amory, E. G. Dunn and W. L. Nottingham were nominated and elected deacons.

It was then moved and seconded and carried that a new book be bought in which to keep the church records and Bros. D. B. Wade, J. F. Thomas, G. J. Curtis and sister Martha Elliott were appointed a committee to confer with the clerk and assist him revising the record of membership.

W. L. Nottingham, Clerk"

This task was carried out but it appears that many months lapsed before the task was accomplished. The first page in the requested "new book" reports a committee meeting on Jan. 6, 1920.

1920

Jan. 6 - ". . . the committee consisted of Bro. J. F. Thomas, Bro. G. J. Curtis and Sister Martha Elliott, Sister Irene Thomas. The new record was made. This committee was for the purpose of taking the names of the members off the old church record

and putting them on a new record, as we had so many members on the old record that were dead. W. L. Nottingham, Clerk"

No other meetings are reported for almost three years but reference is made to a committee presenting its report at the meeting recorded below. It can be assumed that the work of the church was an ongoing matter. The need to improve their church had been recognized and action was planned.

1922

Nov. 19 - "A church meeting was held at Grafton Christian Church Nov. 19, 1922 with Bro. A. J. Renforth acting as chairman. It was moved and seconded that we accept the committee's report - and it was moved and seconded that we put a slab roof on church building, and a chimney on the side of the building, and a pipe fence on the front of the yard. It was moved and seconded that we appoint a building committee to look after the work. The building committee consisted of G. J. Curtis, Geo. L. Smith, W. W. Amory and Howard Burcher. W. L. Nottingham, Clerk"

There is no other written reference to this work but a photograph of the church with Rev. A. J. Renforth standing in front shows the pipe fence, possibly a wood shingle roof, and a chimney on the far side. Members of the present church remember the building being heated by an old iron wood stove attached to this outside chimney.

Pages 7 through 10 have been lost from the third record book and the next recorded meeting was in 1937.

1937

The first record of the election of a chairman occurred on Feb. 14, 1937. The minutes indicate a renewal of interest and a more sophisticated approach in conducting the work of the church.

"Charles S. Moore was chosen as Chairman and W. L. Nottingham as clerk.

It appearing to the congregation that a majority of the Trustees of said church are deceased and that we desire to have a Board of Trustees composed of five members, therefore,

Be it Resolved, That we re-elect the following, G. J. Curtis and John F. Thomas, and elect as new members of the Board W. L. Curtis, H. R. Burcher and W. W. Amory and pray that the same may be confirmed by the Honorable Judge Frank Armistead, Judge of the Circuit Court of York County, State of Virginia."

In addition to new trustees, new elders and deacons were needed and appointments were made. Charles S. Moore and G. J. Curtis were appointed elders, George S. Buchanan, George L. Wood, and Charles N. Moore were appointed deacons.

Although the church had a 32 volt Delco system with an automatic switch, the congregation felt the need for more efficient source of energy. The following action was taken.

"On motion properly made and carried, L. B. Amory and C. S. Moore were authorized to contract with the Virginia Public Service Company for electric current for five years and the Trustees authorized to give right-of-way for the erection of electric wire poles

on front of church property in order that the church can be connected to the electric current wires."

1939

March 31st - Minutes of a meeting for this date report that \$39.25 had been collected and the treasurer, Bro. G. S. Buchanan, was directed to pay same to Bro. Renforth for the quarter. Eleven members were in attendance.

Things seemed to be slowing down and the need for renewal and inspiration was felt by the church.

Feb. 10 - At a called meeting, "The purpose of this meeting was to plan some way or means for the betterment of our church. It was decided that we start a prayer meeting or Christian Endeavor Society and also to hold a quarterly meeting the last of March and also have one of these meetings every quarter . . ." (The researcher can almost hear her father who was a part of this group saying, "Let's get on with the work of the church. The Lord gave us a great work to do.")

No reference is made to the success of said plans but it is within the memory of many current members that an active Christian Endeavor Society was formed and remained active for some time. The urge to grow and be involved again became a strong force.

1941

July 11 - At this meeting a report of the Virginia Missionary Society was made by Mr. and Mrs. G. S. Buchanan. The church was interested

and involved in the work of "Disciples" on a larger scale - no longer bound just to the local congregation.

Plans for a revival were made at this meeting. A later note says that it was held in September with a Mr. White with three additions to the church.

The membership records show this as a strong period of growth for the church. More land seemed desirable.

#### 1942

Jan. 4 - "Bro. A. J. Renforth brought before the church that it had become necessary or soon would be for us to enlarge our cemetery. Bro. Renforth also said the land adjacent to the Church property which was owned by colored John Brooks could be bought for the sum of \$650.00. John Brooks wanted to sell and there was a chance for the church to secure the property.

A motion was made and carried authorizing Bro. Renforth to purchase the land for the church. Bro. Renforth said he would attend to that and would look after the deed and have it ready at an early date about the 30th Jan. 1942.

E. G. Dunn, Clerk"

Court records indicate the action of the motion was carried out and the church acquired "all that certain piece, parcel or lot of land in Grafton Magisterial District, York County, Virginia, containing six (6) acres, be the same more or less and bounded and described as follows: North by the Main Road leading off of Route 17 and running by Grafton Christian Church in the direction of the Warwick County line, East by the land of the

Grafton Christian Church lot and Dr. R. H. Power's estate, South and West by lands now or formerly belonging to Thomas J. Crockett." (It should be noted that this description is copied, verbatim, from the deed dated September 18, 1889, by which Brooks acquired the land from Crockett.) (A later survey indicates that this lot contains approximately 8.6 acres instead of 6.0 acres.)

This Brooks lot contains the ancient brick-making site, the site of the Church Education Building, a substantial number of both old and recent graves, some agricultural land and considerable wooded areas.

Ever ready to accept and deal with change the church had a new challenge to meet in 1943.

#### 1943

May 2 - "At the regular service at Grafton Christian Church May 2nd, 1943, Bro. Renforth requested that his services be suspended until the fall, as he was not well and urged that the members secure a minister for the summer. A committee was appointed to attend to this matter, W. L. Nottingham, E. E. Amory and E. G. Dunn. Signed E. G. Dunn, Clerk"

As a result of this request Bro. Jesse Simoson came to preach at the church from June 1 through the rest of his vacation. Payment for his services was set at \$100 per month.

The need for ongoing work and a strengthening of the understanding of materials to be used in Sunday School prompted action directed toward the development of a more informed laity.

1945

—Feb. 25 - "At a meeting held in Grafton Christian Church . . . Chaplain Melvin Hatchet of Camp Patrick Henry was present with us. Chaplain Hatchet suggested that we have a meeting of teachers the following Wednesday Feb. 28th 1945 for the purpose of discussing our Sunday School lessons. He advised also that we have these meetings each Wednesday night. On March 7th we met in the home of Mrs. W. W. Amory, March 14th we met in the Dandy Chapel, Goodwin Neck, Mar. 21st we met in Grafton Christian Church. This date was also our regular business meeting of the Church. It was also announced that Bro. John Tate would be with us. (Bro. Tate, Supt. of State Missions.) At this meeting we would decide on a 'Budget Plan' to finance a program for the Church. E. G. Dunn - Clerk"

Mar. 21 - "A meeting of the church membership was held in Grafton Christian Church March 21st 1945 with Bro. Manning Burcher presiding. The meeting was opened with the singing of a hymn after which the scripture was read. Bro. John A. Tate being present he was asked to offer the prayer which he did. Bro. Burcher then announced that Mrs. W. W. Amory would present the plans for the Church program. Three things she emphasized very forcibly, pray, teach, and give. These were very necessary if we would be successful in our church program."

Plans were made and a committee appointed to prepare and distribute letters to all members requesting a pledge to support the church program. Again monthly meetings were requested in order to properly transact the business of the church.

In this meeting Bro. Tate also presented support and ideas and told of a young man that he thought the church could get as a summer pastor. A vote was taken authorizing him to take this action on behalf of the church.

April 29 - "At the regular monthly meeting of Grafton Christian Church we arranged for our ordination service. As we felt that some of these Elders should know what was required of our Elders and what was required of a deacon."

May 6 - "Bro. Brinson, pastor of 1st Christian Church, Newport News, Va. came out to conduct the service for the church. It was a very beautiful service."

Elders

C. S. Moore  
E. G. Dunn  
E. E. Amory  
W. L. Nottingham

Deacons

G. C. Cluverius  
A. A. Hogge  
G. S. Buchanan  
Manning Burcher

May 9 - The final entry in the third record book states that the Finance Committee met to check all pledges on hand. Nothing is stated to indicate success or problems for the emerging program of the Church.

The young man to whom Dr. Tate referred as a possible summer minister was Frank Johnson. A native of Bedford, Virginia, Mr. Johnson was a student at Union Theological Seminary, New York. His work with the church during the summer of '45 brought many new and diversified ideas. He was particularly effective with the youth of the church.

The official records from 1945 to 1955 were not found and we must turn to other sources for our information.

Mr. Renforth's death occurred on February 18, 1945. The following report came from the June 9th issue of "The Daily Press". "The members of the congregation of Grafton Christian Church today paid tribute to their former pastor, the late Rev. Andrew Jackson Renforth, at a memorial service held today in the church. A memorial tablet in his honor to be attached to the exterior of the church was unveiled by Ann Bitner Shade, granddaughter of the late pastor. Manning Burcher presided at the service, and Christian ministers on the Peninsula participated in the exercises.

The memorial address was given by the Rev. Dr. John A. Tate, Richmond, who was a classmate of and long associated with the former Grafton pastor. Dr. Tate is secretary of the Christian churches in Virginia and chairman of the board of directors of Lynchburg College. 'He was more than a sectarian minister,' Dr. Tate said in paying tribute. 'He was the parson of York, Warwick and James City Counties.'"

Following the summer service of Mr. Frank Johnson, the church called Mr. Aubrey Russell, a graduate of Transylvania College and the College of the Bible, now Lexington Theological Seminary, to serve as pastor of the church.

Mr. Russell was an effective worker with youth. He not only encouraged their activities at church but taught many of them while employed as a math teacher at Poquoson High School. He served the church until 1947.

After Mr. Russell, the Rev. Willard Jones, better known as Chaplain Jones, became Grafton's minister. He was educated at Hiram College in Ohio and Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in New York. Mr. Jones had been chief chaplain at

Camp Patrick Henry, the Hampton Roads port of debarkation and embarkation in World War II.

Most of the entries that follow for 1950 and 1951 were found in Chaplain Jones' personal notebook and copies of the church bulletins discovered by the R. B. Marriots when searching for records of their time of service at Grafton. Unless otherwise noted all dated references came from bulletins found during their search to help fill in the information gap, from 1950-1958.

#### 1950

June 4 - "We are indebted to the Grafton Players for two splendid performances of 'Our Hearts Were Young and Gay'. Congratulations."

An old newspaper clipping shed a little more light on this theatrical effort. From the "Daily Press", "Grafton, May 13 . . . Grafton Players will present a comedy in three acts by Cornelius Otis Skinner and Emily Kimbrough, taken from the book by the same name, in the Yorktown School Saturday and also Saturday, May 27. The leading parts are played by Mrs. Dorothy King and Mrs. Mary Davis who play the parts of Cornelius Otis Skinner and Emily Kimbrough respectively. Chaplain W. W. Jones plays a double part, that of the Admiral on the ship and of the French Professor. Others taking part are Ralph Meredith, Phillip Edwards, George Hicks, John Patterson, Mrs. Maxine Moore, Ann Cluverius, David Amory, Doris Mills and Mrs. Myrtle Amory."

This experience in fun and fellowship was also profitable as stated in a later bulletin, "At last report the Grafton Players will be able to turn over to the

Building Fund upwards of \$130 as a result of the recent dramatic production. That is after paying all the expenses."

Past history was thoughtfully and beautifully brought to mind during a special day at the church.

June 18 - "On this Father's Day we are celebrating in a special manner. Mr. H. V. C. Wade of Norfolk, an uncle of Mrs. Burke and Mrs. Renforth, is presenting to our Church a silver vase in memory of his father, Reverend William Cary Wade. This illustrious father was a graduate of Bethany College and held a number of pastorates, among them being the Grafton Christian Church. He attended this church in his later years and his grave is in our cemetery. The Church sincerely appreciates the honor accorded it in this thoughtful manner."

Also included in this bulletin was the note that Mr. Jones and Mrs. W. W. Amory would again be teaching at Youth Conference at Lynchburg College. The board had funded two delegates.

June 25 - "A Big Time in the Old Town Friday evening! A Lawn Social at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Amory. This event is sponsored by the Missionary Guild. Come and enjoy a delightful evening of fun and delicious refreshments."

July 30 - In an announcement of CWF work the new organizational plan was briefly explained. "According to the new set-up of the organization under the name of Christian Women's Fellowship, ALL women of the church are members by virtue of their being members of the church. All the women of the church are urged to make a special effort to attend the meetings."

Community and national involvement were strong during this period.

Aug. 13 - "The Union Youth Revival Services begin tonight at Yorktown Baptist Church. They will continue each evening at 8 o'clock through next Sunday." Other churches included were Grace Episcopal, Grafton Baptist, Crooks Memorial Methodist, Dandy Chapel, Providence Methodist and Zion Methodist.

Oct. 8 - "Mrs. Burke, our church treasurer, recently received a letter from Dr. C. O. Hawley, Executive Secretary of the Crusade, congratulating our church on meeting its Crusade financial goal in full." A small card attached at the front of Chaplain Jones' notebook shows that the goal for this year was \$500 for the Crusade for a Christian World through the Unified Promotion program.

Oct. 22 - Big build-up given for the annual "Turkey Dinner and Bazaar: November 3". The women prepared bazaar items during the year and sold these from booths while a huge turkey dinner was being served, also prepared by the women. The price for adults was \$1.50 and 75¢ for children under 12.

Food was sold in more than "cooked" form during this period - sort of on-the-hoof if you please.

Nov. 5 - "Did you know that Grafton Christian Church had a hog? Well, notice that word HAD. Yes, we HAD a hog but we don't have it any more. It was this way. One of our members, Mr. W. C. Tucker, gave a fine hog

to the Church; then two more of our members, W. L. Curtis and W. L. Nottingham, Jr. took time out from their own work to take OUR hog to Smithfield. There it was sold for the sum of \$52.81, which Mr. Tucker has designated for the New Heating plant fund. We are all most grateful to this group of our members for their respective parts in this profitable transaction."

Involvement continued at multiple levels in the new year.

#### 1951

Jan. 7 - "Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill, President of the new National Council of Churches of Christ in America, has issued a call for prayer at the opening of the new half century. Our own brotherhood was one of the first great Christian bodies to join in forming this great organization representing more than 31,000,000 members in 29 Orthodox and Protestant denominations. Bishop Sherrill suggests that in addition to our own prayers for peace we also use the following simple prayer: 'Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, guide we beseech Thee the nations of the world into the way of justice and truth and establish among them that peace which is the fruit of righteousness.'

Jesus said, 'Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.'" A prayer and reminder as apropos for the date of this writing as it was 33 years ago.

Feb. 11 - Church board had decided on a "Visitation Evangelism" campaign to be held during Easter season.

"The program that has been suggested is as follows: At the Sunday School hour on March 4 and 11, the Minister will give the class period

to instructing those who plan to do the visiting. During the week of March 11 to 18 the calls are to be made in the homes. Then Palm Sunday, March 18 will be Church Membership Day. We hope at that time to have several decisions for Christ and transfers of membership to our church. Easter Sunday should then be a day of rejoicing for the whole church."

Feb. 25 - "May we all count it a privilege to observe the Week of Compassion today in our service (sermon topic 'Compassionate Brotherhood') and through our generous offering. Try to imagine yourselves in the situation of millions in Europe and Asia who have not enjoyed a good nourishing meal for months. How would you parents feel if you were unable to provide warm clothing for your children and if you had to put them to bed hungry each night, knowing that unless help came from across the sea, it was quite likely that neither you nor your children would survive the winter?"

Mar. 18 - Schedule for Easter week services announced - included Grafton, Dandy Chapel, Union Communion Service at Masonic Hall in Yorktown, Yorktown Baptist Church and the Union Sunrise Service at the Victory Monument.

Mar. 28 - Pastor's notebook - Board meeting for this date included these items. "No further word re inside of Ch. Bulletin Board; Suggested by a member (Mrs. Renforth) that a low brick wall be built along side of church property next the road; Need for sidewalk to side door; Va Church Temperance Council; Letter from MacGowan."

Apr. 1 - The visitations made during the Easter Season were given credit for "several of the additions" made during the calendar year. There were nine who had made the good confession and four who transferred their membership to Grafton.

May 27 - Plans announced for Daily Vacation Bible School to begin Monday, June 11 and run for two weeks.

Expression of appreciation made to the Fire Department which responded so promptly to a call to the church "on May 17. We are glad that the fire was not in the building, but in one of the trees between the church and the main road. From the road the building appeared to be in flames."

In the pastor's notebook items had been listed for inclusion in the Church Calendar for 1950-51. The final item, Minister's Vacation, was not accomplished that year for during Vacation Bible School on June 20, Chaplain Jones was stricken with a heart attack and died in the church. This marked the second time the church had suffered the loss of a much loved leader while busy with the work he loved most, ministering to the needs of the church.

Following the death of Rev. Jones, R. B. Marriott, whose wife is a niece of Chaplain and Mrs. Jones, agreed to serve the church temporarily and so the work goes on.

Aug. 26 - Congregation reminded that "one hundred people giving \$14 to the Building Fund, will enable us to burn the note at the Homecoming ceremonies, October 14." (No mention as to this being accomplished.)

Oct. 14 - Homecoming celebrated with Reverend Walter F. MacGowan serving as speaker. A new communion service was presented by Mr. and Mrs. Fitzhugh C. Moore in memory of Thomas Jefferson White.

Young people's work and Sunday School continued to expand.

Nov. 11 - Five young people and Mr. and Mrs. Marriott represented church at the South Tidewater Christian Youth Fellowship District Meeting.

#### 1952

Jan. 20 - Library for children and young people is being started. Intermediate class will be our librarians. Interesting Bible story books or interesting children's books requested.

Jan. 27 - Special Youth Services - Sermonettes presented by Janet Barnes, Grayson Fox, Dolores Riggins and Ann Cluverius - special music by Junior Choir.

Feb. 24 - "A Christian Youth Fellowship was organized Tuesday, Feb. 19, at Grafton Christian Church by members of the Newport News and Hampton Christian Youth Fellowships. Mr. Eddie Meanley and Bobby Seward, Sponsor and President, respectively of the South Tidewater CYF and other members of the group met with our Young People." Officers elected were President, Grayson Fox; Vice President, Janet Barnes; Secretary, Doris Riggins; Treasurer, Ralph Meredith, Jr. This group began meeting on a weekly basis as indicated by ensuing bulletin.

April 6 - Easter Week of Prayer Service "That They Might Live" presented by the Fellowship Guild.

April 13 - Evening Worship - "Joseph of Arimathea" presented by the Christian Youth Fellowship directed by Mr. and Mrs. Everett Davis.

May 4 - Plans announced for a joint meeting of the Newport News and Grafton Christian Youth Fellowship groups at the church Sun. May 11. Fellowship Guild will assist with the supper.

The families of the church were challenged to become fully involved in the Christian development of their offspring.

June 1 - A Service of Dedication for parents and children on Children's Day, 1952.

June 8 - Flags in the church presented by the family in memory of Chaplain Willard W. Jones.

June 15 - At the board meeting on Thursday, June 12, two deacons, E. B. Davis and John E. Thomas were appointed. R. B. Marriott was appointed as Elder.

Aug. 10 - Mrs. W. W. Jones has accepted a position as House Resident at Hiram College and "would like to take this opportunity to say good-bye to her many friends here at Grafton. We will miss the fine services she has rendered her church as Organist and Sunday School teacher and as President of the Women's Christian Fellowship." The beautiful music so long enjoyed by the congregation might have been stilled, but the next week's bulletin brought good news.

Aug. 24 - Mrs. Webb is welcomed back to the organ. "We are indeed grateful for her generosity once again."

The congregation continued to feel the need to properly instruct and challenge those selected to lead the church.

Sept. 28 - Service of ordination for deacons and elders conducted by Dr. John A. Tate.

Information concerning involvement beyond the local church was made available frequently.

Nov. 2 - A Visitation Team of the Brotherhood will be present at the church on Wed., Nov. 5th. Program will include a meeting with Sunday School teachers, officers and lay leaders at 1:00 p.m.; at 2:30 a meeting of the CWF; 6:00 Fellowship Dinner and 7:30 General fellowship and inspirational meeting. Plans laid for Grafton's participation in the Long Range Program of the Brotherhood.

Nov. 16 - Congratulations to the women for another successful Turkey Dinner.

Nov. 23 - "The Long Range Program of our Brotherhood has been accepted by our church. We are asked to do only what is expected of any church-rendering service in the community by upholding the ideals of Christ, preaching and teaching his Word, and subscribing to his admonition when he said, 'Go ye into all the world.' It has been said from our pulpit that Grafton could be the biggest little church in the state of Virginia if it wants to be! Those of us who believe that should not be compelled to convince those who do not. Life is too short. There is much to be done. WILL YOU HELP?"

Dec. 14 - Women's Day - Guest speaker, Miss Virginia Smith, served for four years as missionary for the Presbyterian Church in Brazil, and as principal of a mission school in Garanhuns, North Brazil. Evening service by the Guild.

1953

Another red letter year in the life of the church.

Feb. 8 - Mr. John E. Thomas presented the plans for redecorating the sanctuary. Minister's note "Grafton Church is revered throughout the brotherhood as the 'little church with the big heart'. The goodness of the people worshipping within its walls has given Grafton its big heart . . . Our church home is badly in need of repair and strengthening. As a congregation we have grown spiritually. Your minister as a member under our former pastor can testify to that. God's house has not grown with us. To beautify our Lord in the hearts and minds of others, we must beautify all things." The plan was accepted and the footwork begun.

April 5 - CYF presented evening service, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" in music, picture and story.

May 3 - Grafton hosts the Tidewater CYF. About 100 young people are expected for their regular quarterly meeting.

May 31 - "The \$1,250 pledged by Grafton Christian Church for the Lynchburg College Dormitory Fund has been raised and paid."

One hurdle passed - another looms ahead. Change in practice and tradition came about slowly and painfully in the long established congregation, yet it was necessary that the church expand its horizons to maintain its role in an ever changing world.

Aug. 2 - "At the last meeting of the Official Board it was decided that a classification of membership be set up whereby those who wished to worship with us, who wanted to consider Grafton their church home and yet for some reason could not enter into full membership requirements of our Brotherhood, would be considered Associate Members of our church."

Sept. 20 - "On Oct. 5th work will begin on the redecoration of our Sanctuary. Have you started your mile of dollars? Have you added to one already started?"

Oct. 11 - Homecoming on Oct. 4 huge success. "Nearly 300 feet were added to our Mile of \$'s at the afternoon offering."

Dec. 20 - The congregation is still meeting in the Sunday School area (present Renforth Room) therefore, the Christmas Pageant must be presented twice. Eight characters are listed with three singing groups, and the pageant itself was divided into six scenes. "The Shepherd and the Angel" promised to be a major accomplishment.

1954

This was a year of cramped facilities but expanding service. With its goal to make a stronger, more beautiful witness to God's work all groups in the church were involved.

Feb. 21 - District CYF including Grafton's Young People will meet at Hilton Christian Church to entertain and welcome a Deputation Team of the students from Lynchburg College. Week of Compassion begins. Music program continues to grow.

March 7 - "A called meeting for those interested in establishing a regular choir. We are most anxious to begin our Worship of Special Music. Anyone from the Young People's Department and older is cordially invited to meet with the Music Committee at the Church." Organ fund emphasized also. A chart of organ keys was placed in the vestibule and \$5 paid for one key.

April 11 - CYF presents pageant, "The Magdalene". CWF will observe Easter Week of Prayer at the church on Monday at 2:30 p.m.

April 18 - Plans announced for next week's Dedication Service and Historical Pageant. Also for Evangelistic Services to be held May 9-14.

April 25 - An all day ceremony was held when the redecorated sanctuary was dedicated and the one hundred twentieth birthday of Grafton Christian Church was celebrated. After morning worship and the dedication service, lunch was served on the grounds. In the afternoon a pageant was presented that told of Grafton's turmoil and achievements over the past 120 years. The pageant was written and directed by Mrs. Walter Amory and Mrs. William Sulzberger. Mrs. Mim Lemay of Yorktown acted as technical advisor and period costumes were loaned by Mrs. George Blow.

Much effort, time, and individual gifts made the day a reality. From the Mid-Week Reminder of May 2: "Our very sincere appreciation to the following for their gifts to Grafton

Church: Mr. and Mrs. Clifton P. Mills - The Carpeting, Communion Table and Chairs; Mr. and Mrs. John Elliot Thomas, Mrs. Irene Thomas, and Mrs. Horace Filer - The Cross; Mr. John Burke in memory of his grandmother, Mrs. Sarah Wade Grey - a Window; Mrs. Laura Burke and Mrs. Nancy Grey Holden in memory of Mrs. Ella Grey McGarry - a Window." Sunday School classes and other organizations and members and friends gave numerous other items. Other additions included new lighting fixtures, shutters, a choir loft, a baptistry, central heating system, new floors, walls, paneling, new vestibule and an electric organ (replacing the pump organ).

The Evangelistic Services were held with the Rev. Jack McCullough of the Euclid Ave. Christian Church in Lynchburg as speaker. Reported as inspiring and thought provoking. Attendance had not been as great as desired.

July 25 - "We are pleased to announce that the Official Board has appointed Mrs. L. Garnett Webb Organist-Director of the Grafton Choir. She assumes her directorship over a fine group of people which is giving of its time and talent toward our Ministry of Music."

Aug. 29 - Guest speaker, Mrs. Nathaniel Peters, arrived in America on Aug. 17th to bring greetings from her husband, remembered by many from a previous visit to Grafton. "Mrs. Peters has the honor of being the Official Language Examiner for Missionaries in India and the high distinction of being the first woman appointed to serve on the Executive Missionary Council for India."

Under new leadership the youth program continued to grow.

Sept. 19 - First regular fall meeting of youth with new sponsors, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Bateman. 15 young people in attendance.

Oct. 3 - Homecoming Day, instituted by Chaplain Jones as an annual celebration. Speaker for the afternoon service is Rev. Charles W. Miller of the Hilton Christian Church. Nine young people to receive the right hand of fellowship during the service today.

The need for informed and trained leaders was always in the forefront of activities.

Nov. 21 - "Our congratulations to the teachers and others of our Church School who completed a course of study on teaching techniques. The class was ably taught by Mrs. Alverne Powell, former Director of Children's Work for the Virginia Christian Missionary Society and a Public School teacher in the City of Warwick." Participation in such courses had occurred over a period of years.

1955

The opportunity to know and be known in the community brought about many types of ecumenical and brotherhood involvement.

March 20 - First in a series of Community Mission Study Classes to be held at Zion Methodist Church. "India, Pakistan and Ceylon" is the theme to be studied. This continued through a four lesson series.

Apr. 3 - Evening Service, "The Easter Story in Pantomime and Song", presented by the CYF and Church School.

May 8 - York County Women's Christian Temperance Union will observe its 27th Anniversary at the

May 11th meeting to be held at Grafton Christian Church.

June 12 - Tidewater District Convention at Grafton June 28 & 29th. "It is both an honor and a lot of hard work . . . We are pleased that our church is taking its rightful place in the affairs of our Brotherhood. The historic significance and influence of Grafton Christian Church is important to all of us. May we uphold it in a true Christian fashion."

Sept. 11 - Announcement of Church School Teachers and Officers Meeting at the church for Tues. night. The prior practice of meeting before board sessions had changed but meetings continued on a regular basis. Great emphasis on Church School participation existed during this period with the theme, "There is a class for you" recurring in many editions of the bulletin.

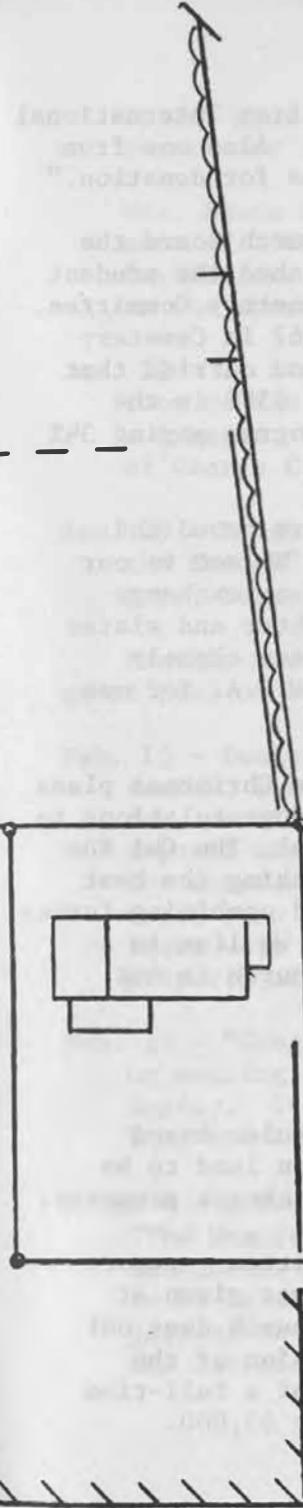
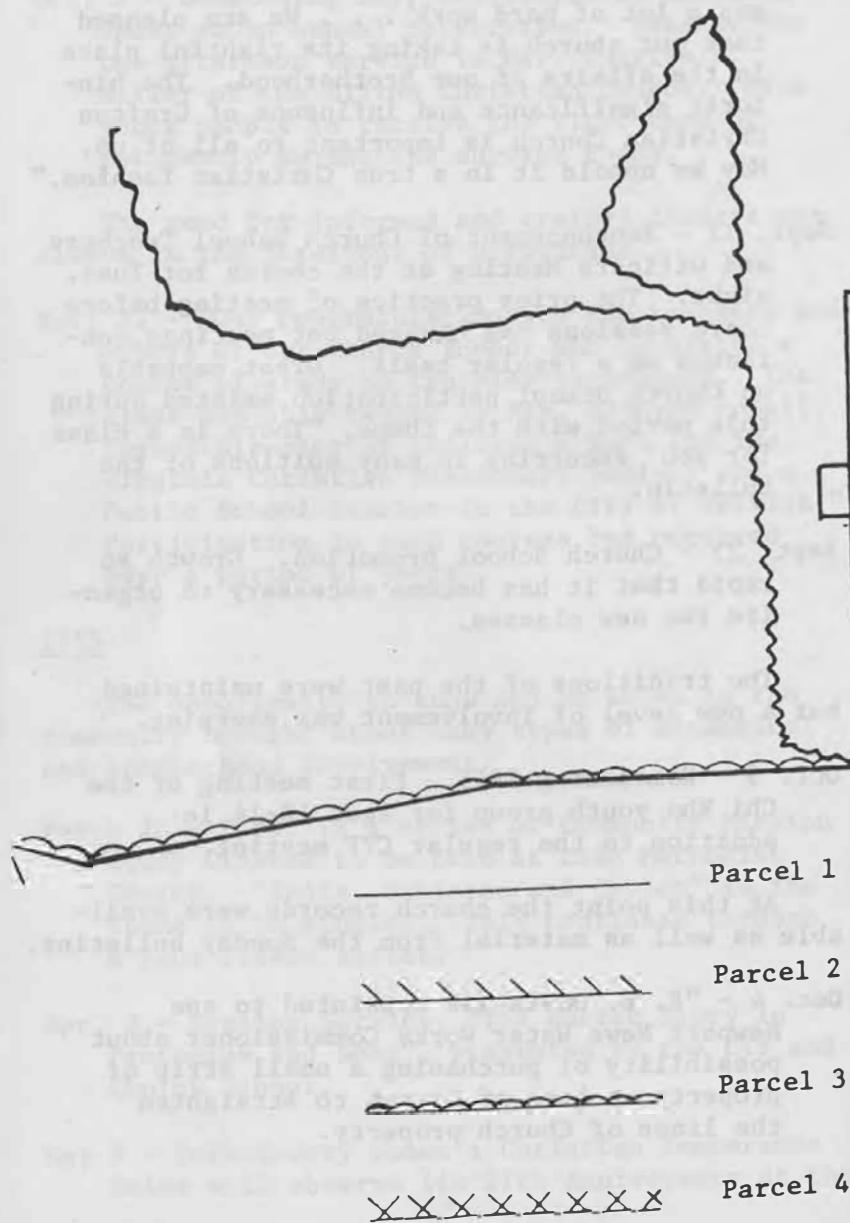
Sept. 25 - Church School promotion. Growth so rapid that it has become necessary to organize two new classes.

The traditions of the past were maintained but a new level of involvement was emerging.

Oct. 9 - Homecoming 1955. First meeting of the Chi Rho youth group for ages 12-14 in addition to the regular CYF meeting.

At this point the church records were available as well as material from the Sunday bulletins.

Dec. 4 - "E. B. Davis was appointed to see Newport News Water Works Commissioner about possibility of purchasing a small strip of property at back of Church to straighten the lines of Church property.

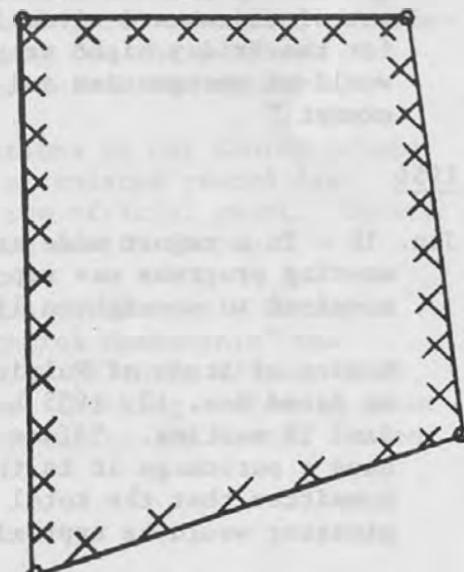


Parcel 1 - 0.35 acre given by John Curtis and his wife, Virginia, in 1834 for "one Spanish milled dollar".

Parcel 2 - 0.65 acre purchased from Robert H. Power and wife, Dorothea B. Power, 1891, for \$15.

Parcel 3 - 8.6 acres purchased in 1942 from John Brooks for \$650.

Parcel 4 - 0.61 acre given by Hazel and Carrie Wray Curtis in 1983.



Letter of thanks was received from International Convention for donation given. Also one from the Fire Department thanking us for donation."

At this same meeting of the Church Board the decision was made that established the prudent investment practices of the Cemetery Committee. "It was stated that we have \$767 in Cemetery Endowment Fund. Motion made and carried that Trustees be notified to invest \$500 in the Church Extension Investment Program paying 3½% Semi-Annually."

Dec. 11 - Women's Day 1955. "We are proud and privileged to welcome Dr. Bina Nelson to our service today. She is here as an exchange Professor for India. The daughter and sister of ministers, Dr. Nelson has been closely connected with the Calcutta Y.W.C.A. for one and one-half years."

Dec. 25 - For some reason elaborate Christmas plans were adjusted. "Our sincere congratulations to the classes of the Church School, The Chi Rho Fellowship and the Choir for making the best out of an awkward situation and combining forces for the Friday night program. We live in a world of emergencies and the Church is not exempt."

## 1956

Jan. 18 - In a report made at a regular board meeting progress was reported on land to be acquired to straighten line of church property.

Report of Study of Pulpit Committee - report is dated Nov. 10, 1955 but it was given at Jan. 18 meeting. "Since the church does not have a parsonage it is the opinion of the committee that the total cost of a full-time minister would be approximately \$5,000.

Motion made and carried that we table this report for further consideration.

Mrs. Laura Burke reported that the investment of \$500 had been completed and the Certificate of Purchase would be forwarded to the church."

Jan. 22 - At a special meeting of the congregation on Jan. 22 J. Elliott Thomas was elected a trustee, to fill vacancy created by death of George C. Cluverius.

Jan. 29 - Youth Sunday, topic "Youth Looks at the Church", sermonettes presented by Barry Barnes, Peggy Wood, and Doris Riggins.

Monthly meetings of the board included a great deal of business.

Feb. 15 - Dealt with water acquisition, deed search, cemetery study, constitution committee, certificate received and safe place for deposit sought, thanks from Christian Home for donation, vacuum cleaner disposed of, water pump to be sold, and continued negotiations were under way for the purchase of property across road from the church.

Feb. 19 - "Congratulations to our Church School on setting a new attendance record last Sunday. 140 was the official count. Herein lies the life blood of the Church."

March 4 - A Wednesday night Pastor's Class on "The Meaning of Church Membership" was announced. A series of three classes were to be held. Anyone thinking seriously about joining the church during the Easter Season was invited.

March 11 - The South Tidewater District Vacation Church School Institute will be held at Grafton next Saturday. All workers urged to attend.

March 12 - Special meeting of the Official Board called for purpose of receiving proposed constitution. The constitution was read and each article discussed. Referred back to committee for changes.

Early efforts to consolidate all deeds to church property began in this year.

March 21 - At a regular meeting of the board, "Motion made by Leo Roach, seconded by Howard R. Burcher that a 'Collective Deed' be drafted to include all property as outlined in three separate deeds."

The committee having considered and adjusted the constitution, it was returned for board consideration.

March 30 - Special program bulletin - Good Friday Baptismal Service held, 21 candidates for baptism.

Apr. 8 - "A statistical report from our Church School indicates that for the 2nd Quarter the average attendance was 114.5 per Sunday. Enrollment is steadily climbing to a high of 159 last Sunday."

Apr. 18 - Board meeting of this date included the following items: "The suggested changes in the constitution were then read by J. Elliott Thomas. He moved that the constitution as revised be accepted by the Official Board, this motion was seconded by Leo Roach and carried."

Plans for obtaining more attractive communion ware were made at the same meeting. Motion made and carried that we purchase tray with glasses for Communion Service. J. Elliott and Cora Thomas donate bread tray for Communion Service."

May 27 - "South Tidewater District Meeting of Chi Rho Fellowship. Approximately 150 young people will be our guests for an afternoon of fellowship, instruction and fun."

Progress again to make the church more modern and comfortable.

June 20 - At a regular meeting of the board it was announced that final arrangements were completed and the Church was now supplied with water from City Water Works.

July 18 - The regular monthly meeting of the official board had several business items. "The chairman asked that a letter of appreciation be sent to Mr. C. Spencer for allowing the Church to be tapped in on his water line free of charge."

Among new business items the chairman asked that reports be prepared for the next meeting from the Sunday School, Women's Fellowship, The Guild, CYF, and Chi Rho. These reports were to be mimeographed for distribution to the congregation.

"A letter was read by the chairman from Mr. E. G. Dunn resigning as Elder and Trustee of the Church. A motion was made and seconded that before the resignation be accepted a committee be selected to call on Mr. Dunn."

Sept. 19 - Some of the problems of the previous board meeting appeared resolved at this one. "Mr. Thomas gave a report on his visit with Mr. Dunn. He stated that Mr. Dunn was under the impression that the proposed Church Constitution had been passed by the Church Congregation. Mr. Dunn felt that he could not continue as Elder and Trustee of the church if the Constitution had been passed in its present form. His resignation was deferred until the next meeting."

A thank you was given to Ralph Meredith, Jr. for his service as organist for the church and Sunday School.

Oct. 7 - Annual Homecoming. Youth Choir, under direction of Janet Barnes, presented its first offerings as a part of the Church's Ministry of Music.

The fellowship of the church was enjoyed in a variety of ways.

Nov. 4 - Announcement of "Big Church Fun Nite" at Red Men's Hall in Grafton, to be held next Friday night. Beginning at 5:00 p.m. Food, Fun, Fellowship and Football. Come for supper early, get away early and see the York High Game.

Dec. 23 - At a 7:30 service, a cantata, "The Dawn of Christmas", was presented by the Grafton choir which now had grown to 17 members.

1957

Jan. 27 - In honor of Youth Sunday this year all Church School Classes were taught by young people. 10 CYF members took on the task.

Feb. 3 - Announcement included "Week of Compassion February 17-25. Help those who are unable to help themselves. To them the bread of life is real and necessary. Our support provides the difference between Christian Communion and Communism."

Feb. 20 - The minutes of the regular board meeting stated that a report was presented on the findings concerning the status of the cemetery and proposals made for improvement.

Tentative Code of Ethics of the Disciples of Christ, which is to be adopted by the brotherhood as a whole was presented. A copy was given to each member to study and return with comments.

Robert B. Marriott asked that a Pulpit Committee be appointed to obtain the services of a full-time minister. The committee was named and directed to take action in securing a minister with approval of congregation.

Feb. 24 - At a special meeting of the congregation, the board action that appointed and instructed the committee to secure a minister was approved. Committee began its task this day.

After the presentation of the letter from the United Christian Missionary Society concerning the tentative Code of Ethics, it was accepted as presented.

July 14 - The youth as well as adults were active in community affairs. "Rummage and Bake Food Sale at the Teen House sponsored by the CYF."

July 27 - "Leaving today for Chi Rho Conference at Gordonsville for a glorious week of

inspirational fellowship and spiritual growth: Susan Antoniewicz, Nancy Belvin, Betty Davis, William Shields, Elizabeth Bateman, Betty Sue Belvin, Robert Eley, Gloria Spain."

July 28 - Following the announcements of CYF and Chi Rho rallies being held that day the following "pat on the back" was given. "We are happy that great groups of our young people are very active in these district meetings. What they learn and what they do strengthens and assures the future of God's work and His church. We are proud of our young people and their sponsors, Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Bateman of Chi Rho and Mr. and Mrs. Edward Fox of CYF."

Aug. 11 - Announcement of the annual church school picnic to be held at Buckroe as it has been for the past several years, Wed. Aug. 14 at 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 3 - "Several of our young people are at the CYF District Retreat at the Jamestown Camp this weekend. This has come to mean a great deal to all young people of the Tidewater Christian Churches. These three days of inspiration and fellowship will add greatly to the future program and planning of the whole church."

Oct. 6 - Annual Homecoming with dinner on the grounds as usual and the afternoon sermon, offered by Rev. J. Stuart Wake, "The Church with a Future". Both the Youth and Adult Choirs presented special music.

Dec. 8 - The church continued in interfaith activities. The candlelight communion service on Christmas Sunday Night promises

to be new, different and inspirational. This will be a splendid opportunity for us to come to His Table quietly and reverently, grasping in our hearts the Truth and Perfection of His birth. Our guests will be the members and friends of the Yorkminster congregation."

Dec. 22 - "We will be pleased to have as our pulpit guest next Sunday morning the Rev. David C. Derby, Minister of the Lake Avenue Methodist Church, Rochester, NY and a student at the Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Mr. Derby is a graduate of Lynchburg College, class of 1955. We are happy to welcome these young people to our church." There was to be a covered dish supper at the church on Saturday night to meet the Derby's.

## 1958

Jan. 26 - Youth Sunday Sermonettes on the topic "For Me - No Other Way But By: 'Believing in the Golden Rule' - Edward Clarke; 'Observing the Sabbath' - Miss Betty Davis; 'Believing in the Church' - Miss Catherine Hogge; 'Living According to Christ's Rules' - Barry Lee Barnes; 'Having Faith in My Fellow Man' - Miss Jean Rousey."

Feb. 2 - The establishment of a new area of service was announced. "A nursery for all children up to five years of age is now provided. Some of your 'cares' will be taken care of there. Come to worship and give God the rest." Minister's note - "Meeting to call David Derby Vote 64-3".

In June the congregation expressed its appreciation to the Rev. Robert B. Marriott and his wife, Jane, at a reception held at the home

of Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Renforth, Yorktown. The Marriotts were presented a silver tray as a further expression of thanks.

The following quote was found in the "Chesapeake Christian" concerning Bob's work with the church. "Beginning with the church August 1, 1951, Mr. Marriot has been leading the church to assume a full-time minister. During the period of his service, 62 members have been added, 46 by baptism and 16 by transfer. During his ministry the indebtedness on the Education Building has been paid and \$23,000 has been spent in refurnishing and redecorating the sanctuary which was built in 1834.

The indebtedness on the sanctuary is now only \$3,000. Mr. Marriot has been active in leading the church to cancel this debt before July 1 when the new minister, Mr. Derby, will assume his duties." (This was not accomplished as the July 16th minutes show a balance of \$2,200 remaining on note.)

June 29 - "We welcome the Reverend and Mrs. David C. Derby into our fellowship. They have been called to lead this congregation to new spiritual heights. May we, as a people, be worthy of this splendid, dedicated young couple and thank God that cooperatively we can and shall serve our community as we reconsecrate ourselves in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

All dated material from this point in the history of Grafton Christian Church comes from the official record books of the church.

On July 6th the first full-time minister was welcomed to the pulpit. No longer would the church have to vie with school systems, the

United States Army, or any other outside organization. It had now matured to the point that its members could be assured the full-time services of a person whose sole responsibility it was to attend to the emotional and spiritual needs of the congregation.

July 16 - New ideas and new areas of emphasis evolved from the first board meeting after Mr. Derby accepted the church's call.

1. An Evangelism Committee was planned.
2. Plans made for a monthly newsletter containing information on activities from all organizations of the church to go to all members.
3. A service committee was organized "for the purpose of sending flowers to the sick and bereaved as well as other aid which might be needed".
4. Copies of "The Secret Place" would be ordered and made available each quarter.
5. Visitor's cards were to be ordered and placed in the church.

Each monthly meeting of the board opened new opportunities to the members of the church.

Aug. 20 - Goals for Unified Promotion announced and agreed to, plans made for monthly Fellowship Suppers, Leadership Training School announced to be held in the Newport News Church.

Sept. 17 - Board voted to participate with other Peninsula Disciples of Christ Churches in placing weekly advertisements of services in the Saturday issue of the "Daily Press".

Oct. 15 - Committee organized to begin study of facility needs as related to Sunday School space.

Nov. 19 - Long anticipated rules and regulations for use of cemetery presented - again returned to committee for revision - (no rubber stamp group this church board).

1959

Jan. 21 - Cemetery regulations, after one last amendment, were adopted. Committees organized for publicity and Week of Compassion. A gift of \$100 received from Mr. and Mrs. Garnett Webb to begin a fund for a new building. Mrs. Laura Burke told the group about plans to build a brick wall in front of the church yard.

Feb. 18 - Building Study Committee report was received. Total increase in Sunday School attendance had been 100% over the past 8 years, present average attendance per Sunday was 116 pupils. Stated reasonable expectation based on this rate of growth would be 500 pupils per Sunday by 1980. Based on their findings they recommended that an overall progressive building program and plan be developed.

Motion also made that Grafton Christian Church try to secure the State Convention meeting to be held in 1960.

March 18 - Rev. Derby reported that Rev. H. Myron Kauffman would be morning speaker for the 125th anniversary and the pageant, first presented in 1954, would be presented in the afternoon. He also reported 20 additions to the church since July 1, 1958.

May 20 - Stewardship and Finance Committee presented plans for the Every Member Canvas on June 14. Possibility of installing air conditioners in the sanctuary to be explored.

July 15 - Six standing committees appointed for next year. Proposed constitution that had been adopted by board in 1956 was to be presented to the congregation on Sept. 13.

Aug. 19 - Stewardship and Finance Committee reported 10 teams, of two men each, had made 77 calls during Every Member Canvas with pledges of about \$9,247 resulting. Plans made to allow use of church property in wooded area for picnic area be granted to trailer court residents.

Instructions given to proceed with brick wall in front of church if it is so desired.

Request received from Mr. E. G. Dunn that his letter of resignation presented in July, 1956 be acted upon. Motion made that "the board accept, with profound regrets, his request and in recognition of his long and faithful service for Christ and Grafton Christian Church, Mr. Dunn be appointed Elder Emeritus." The motion, amended to grant Mr. Dunn all rights and privileges and membership on the official board, was passed.

Sept. 13 - "A special congregational meeting of the members of Grafton Christian Church was called (on this date) for the purpose of approving or disapproving a proposed constitution for the church." After reading and discussion the motion was made for adoption. With a vote of 53 for and 6 against the motion was adopted.

Sept. 16 - The following resolution was presented and adopted by the board. "We, the Official Board of Grafton Christian Church, request

that the following resolution appear in the minutes of this meeting: That, in recognition of past Service, loyalty, faith and Devotion shown by Mr. E. G. Dunn, with regard to Our Lord Jesus Christ and Grafton Christian Church; be it resolved that we, at this time, express our love and gratitude for him, and pray that God will Bless and keep him forevermore. Amen."

A resolution was planned to be sent to the family of Mrs. Laura Burke to express appreciation for her years of devoted service.

Departments and committees as set up under new constitution were explained by Mr. Derby.

#### 1960

Feb. 21 - Special meeting of congregation - T. W. Antoniewicz elected to serve as trustee to replace Mr. E. G. Dunn, who resigned.

March 16 - The functional committees of the church were reported to be hard at work and interest in the building program was growing, classes were being held in church membership.

May 18 - The board received a report of the state convention meeting from Rev. Derby who also stated he was to serve as director of the Centrava Conference for young people. Building Committee presented proposed location, artist's concept, and floor plan for new Sunday School building.

June 15 - At the annual congregational meeting, "Mr. Welford Harlan presented an artist's sketch and floor plan of the proposed new building. Mr. T. W. Antoniewicz moved that the committee proceed with the planning for the proposed building and present another set of floor plans for approval by the

congregation. Mr. J. E. Thomas seconded the motion and it so carried."

Church membership on this date was reported as 224.

Aug. 14 - At a special called meeting of the board the Men's Fellowship was granted permission to install window type air conditioners in the sanctuary.

Sept. 21 - Youth choir organized with Mrs. Webb as director. CYF volunteered to address Homecoming invitations, private kindergarten and nursery school renting space from the church had a capacity enrollment of 31 and four members of the group attended Sunday School for the first time.

#### 1961

April 9 - At a regular board meeting constitutional changes were adopted which established Minister's Cabinet - made up of minister, chairman of General Board, chairman of each functional committee, president of CWF, president of CMF, president of CYF. "Its duties shall be:

- a. To serve as the coordinating body in planning the program of the Church.
- b. To make such recommendations to the General Board as it feels necessary for the planning and work of the program of the Church.
- c. To discuss and evaluate the work of the church.
- d. To present a balanced calendar of Church events for each year which shall meet with the approval of each committee, board and fellowship represented."

July 1 - Meetings of the above named cabinet were set to alternate with the meetings of the general board on the 3rd Wednesday night of each month at 8:00 p.m.

Nov. 15 - Sunday School growth made it necessary to divide the primary class (grades 1-3) and a heavy curtain divider was authorized. Board approved motion that the different departments be presented their budget each year and until they spent beyond that, the church treasurer would honor their bills from the General Fund.

Motion also approved continuing practice of loose offering received on Woman's Day being given to Christian Women's Fellowship.

1962

Jan. 17 - Fund established by board to have money available for needy families in our church when emergencies might arise. Mrs. Alleyne Burcher named treasurer of this fund.

Details for an Evangelistic meeting were announced and April 8-13 was selected as the time for such a meeting. Members were to provide board and lodging.

New offering plate presented by the Derby's with request that three others like it be provided since the old ones were so badly worn.

March 7 - "Mr. Welford Harlan submitted the following proposal: It is proposed that a parsonage be erected on the church owned lot in Grafton, Virginia on old route 17 next to the Presbyterian parsonage." The proposal, including plans for financing was approved and a committee named to begin another phase in the expanding role of Grafton Christian Church.

May 16 - Thanks given for cooperation in the preaching mission held in April and an offering of \$184.88 reported during that time.

Parsonage plans presented and approved. Resolution to borrow \$13,500 and drawing up a deed of trust also approved.

Plans to acquire new pews also underway. Budget was questioned and returned to committee with plans to re-present it at a special called meeting on May 20. At that meeting the adjusted budget was approved.

May 30 - Congregational meeting - A report was presented by Rev. Derby covering the past four years including - membership growth from 183 to 232; establishment of a minister's study/office at the church; adoption of a constitution assuring full membership to associate members and establishing functional committees; membership classes for youth; establishment of Minister's Cabinet; re-establishment of Junior and Youth Choirs; establishment of Christian Men's Fellowship; announcement that CYF group will take permanent possession of the Trophy this September for highest attendance at District meetings; establishment of a Preaching Mission (to be held annually); use of tape recorder for taking worship services to the homes of shut-ins and other gains previously mentioned in this history.

Work on the parsonage was authorized and plans approved to borrow funds and proceed with the actual construction.

July 12 - Project to obtain new pews to be handled by the CMF. Contractor had begun work on the parsonage.

"The chairman read a letter from Rev. Derby in which he submitted his resignation as minister of Grafton Christian Church, effective Sept. 15, 1962. G. C. Cluverius moved that the resignation be accepted and that the Board go on record as wishing Rev. Derby the best of everything in his new work at the Strasburg Christian Church. The motion was seconded by Omar W. White and so carried. Nominations were made from the floor for a five member pulpit committee with the following elected by secret ballot: Mrs. W. W. Amory, Chairman; Mrs. F. C. Barnes; G. C. Cluverius; R. B. Marriott; and L. G. Webb." (Mrs. Barnes resigned and Mrs. W. F. Harlan was appointed to serve on committee.)

The church entered still another phase of anticipation and expectation, seeking a new personality to minister to the needs of a growing congregation.

Sept. 12 - At a regular board meeting it was announced that parsonage would be ready for dedication, as a part of the annual Homecoming observation on Oct. 7.

"Mrs. W. W. Amory, chairman of the pulpit committee, reported that a minister from Ohio, the Rev. George Massay, would be here on Sept. 30 to deliver the morning worship sermon."

Rev. R. B. Marriott was to be compensated \$30 per week to serve as supply minister.

Oct. 10 - At a special meeting of the General Board, "Mrs. Amory moved that the Board accept the recommendation that Rev. Massay be called as pastor of Grafton Christian Church. R. B. Marriott seconded the motion. An outline of 'the responsibilities of the congregation and of the minister as required by the congregation' was distributed and discussed. Following active discussion, the Board voted unanimously in favor of the Pulpit Committee's recommendation."

Oct. 14 - At a special congregational meeting the Board's recommendation was accepted and Rev. Massay was called to become pastor of the Church to begin his duties on Nov. 1, 1962.

Rev. Massay's signed acceptance dated Oct. 22, 1962 was received and planning began for continued growth and progress.

Nov. 11 - Regular board meeting conducted by J. E. Thomas. He "welcomed Rev. Massay, who gave his initial report. He asked for 'frank' relations between the minister and the congregation."

Petition presented by W. H. Sulzberger from the Sunday School officers and teachers asking that more available space be constructed as soon as possible. Committee appointed to begin study of fund raising for such construction. Said committee to report by the meeting of the Minister's Cabinet. As one of his first ecumenical duties Rev. Massay would deliver the sermon for the Union Thanksgiving service to be held at Providence Methodist Church.

1963

Jan. 16 - Regular board meeting held. W. E. Fox reported "a nice installation service for Rev. Massay" had been held.

Rev. Massay expressed his feelings that the proposed preaching mission planned for the spring could be more effective if postponed until 1964 so that more complete planning could be done.

Plans made to help defray cost on new educational building through individual pledges. Committee appointed to begin this task.

March 20 - The new year was off to a busy start with the CMF undertaking the acquisition of new pews, new hymn books are to be ordered, delegates appointed to the State Convention. Request made for help in counting offering each Sunday, "Board decided that the deacons serving on a Sunday be the 'counting committee' along with Mr. Wilkerson (Stewardship Chairman) for that Sunday."

May 15 - Congregational meeting - Growth in church continued with a membership of 263 reported, only 20 of which are non-resident.

Loan proposal presented to acquire funds for building program, and committee authorized by congregation to proceed.

July 15 - Regular board meeting included a report from the minister that he had taught in CYF Conference in June and that during the summer a total of 9 young people from the church would be attending various conferences and camps.

Oct. 23 - Called board meeting to continue decision making for new building and to hear committee reports. Leadership training school averaged 12 to 13 participants, help will be needed to remodel facilities at Craig Springs, new sign designed for placement on Route 17, community Thanksgiving service to be held at Grafton.

1964

Feb. 19 - Minutes show that business as usual continued and a mission goal of \$4,400 was accepted by the board to be paid over the next three years, but because of the church's indebtedness for local construction, a two year extension was to be requested in order to meet this goal. Reception planned for new members.

April 15 - A special called meeting of the board was held with budget decisions postponed for another called meeting, 85% of the building was reported to have been completed. The need for a church organist was presented. Delegates were appointed for the State Convention. Rev. Massay expressed disappointment over the poor response attendance-wise to the preaching mission. "Our congregation's response to evening services of this type is sufficiently poor to make me question the wisdom of trying this kind of thing in the future." He also emphasized the importance of accepting the responsibility to use the new facilities and the work that it will require wisely and in a Christian spirit. "It seems fairly evident to me that a nice building can never be a substitute for Christian teachers or adults willing to work with youth." He also informed the

group that a York Ministers' Association had been formed and he had been elected president for the coming year.

May 20 - At an annual congregational meeting the following was approved - Resolution expressing "gratitude to Mrs. L. Garnett Webb for exceptional interest, loyal support, faithful vision, able direction and valuable service rendered during these thirteen years past. Whereas, in 1951, when Grafton Christian Church was bereft of musical leadership, and Whereas, her time, talent, and money was freely given to establish a ministry of music, to provide leadership for the purchase of a new organ, to inspire the organization of three choirs, to introduce a wide variety of anthems creating a fine library and choral repertoire . . . Be it Resolved that the congregation . . . extend this expression of gratitude to Mrs. L. Garnett Webb."

July 15 - At the regular board meeting the new building was proclaimed completed, the building committee was dismissed and the care of the building was turned over to the property committee.

In his report for the year, Mr. Massay reported 21 members added to the church. He also voiced a need for improved organization in the church.

Outreach report stated that the chairman had served on the State Outreach Committee, four members had attended the Statewide Outreach Rally at Lynchburg College and five members had attended the District Outreach Supper meeting at Hampton Christian Church.

Oct. 19 - At a regular board meeting the community became more involved as the board granted permission for the Girl Scouts to use the

building on Tuesdays, after school. Committee appointed to look into the use of the funds provided by the Frazier bequest. Board Chairman, Welford Harlan, requested that any committee chairman unable to attend the board meeting please arrange with someone to serve as his representative.

### 1965

Jan. 20 - The regular board meeting was held with some concern expressed over terms of deacons and elders as set in present constitution, possible revision was being considered.

Mr. Massay spoke to the board concerning improvement of communication between the members and the minister and emphasized the need for a class for young people.

May 21 - At the regular bi-monthly board meeting the Christian Education Committee recommended that the Sunday School year be changed to conform with the church year - this was approved unanimously. Mr. Massay felt that he did not have the time required to put into preparation for the young people's class but stated that Mrs. Massay would be willing to work with this group.

May 18 - At a congregational meeting the membership committee emphasized importance of improving attendance at regular church functions.

The minister in his report expressed pleasure at the increasing number of new people who would be serving on the church board. "Churches have personalities, and to a large extent the personality of a church represents the total of the personalities of the congregation. The church's

strengths and weaknesses are reflections of our own strengths and weaknesses. I hope that in the coming year we can pool our strengths in such a manner that Grafton Christian Church will be stronger and that we shall be also." Membership was listed as approximately 200 active and 24 non-resident.

Aug. 14 - The minister's report showed a continuation of growth in financial support of the church. "Today I mailed the report for the yearbook of our churches. To the best of my financial ability, it appears that we raised last year a total of \$23,306. We gave \$3,228.20 to missions and causes outside the local church. This means that we gave \$901.98 more to missions this year than last, which is a sizable increase. We made payments of \$4,209.67 toward the new education building. (We also paid \$1,200 toward the retirement of the debt on the parsonage.) We presently have an indebtedness of \$38,935. We have a balance of a few hundred dollars in the current account - and it has been a while since that was true."

Also at this meeting the structure of the church was reviewed by use of a chart. "He pointed out that the congregation had final authority over all issues and enjoyed complete local autonomy."

Oct. 20 - During the regular committee reports Bro. Massay in presenting the Christian Education Committee report described plans for Church picnic, Vacation Bible School, Christmas play and new Sunday School structure. He further reported "that due to press of regular business of Sunday School teachers, it was decided not to invite Goodman Moore here for an instructional class at this time."

A set of regulations, prepared by the Property Committee and submitted by Rev. Massay, concerning the use of the Educational Building by outside organizations or persons was discussed and adopted by the Board.

## 1966

Jan. 19 - Some changes were proposed by various committees during this regular meeting of the board. For the Worship Committee, "Bro. Massay reported on the meeting held by this committee, and stated that after discussing the nursery situation, it was decided to recommend a paid attendant be provided for this position. He pointed out, how in the past, a few had carried the burden, and at times, teachers had to serve in this capacity."

"It was reported that CYF activities had been suspended at the moment; lack of teenage interest seemed to be the problem."

May 4 - During the next recorded Board Meeting for the year the report of the Constitution Committee was presented by Bro. Bill Larew. After thorough discussion the proposed changes in the By-Laws and Constitution were unanimously approved. (These proposed changes were later adopted by the congregation at a called meeting on June 12, 1966. Thus evolved the constitution under which Grafton Christian Church presently functions.)

Sept. 25 - Congregational meeting brought forth numerous committee reports:

CWF reported four general meetings of all women's groups to be held in March, June, September and December and enumerated total group and small group activities.

Membership Committee outlined schedule and responsibilities of this committee for the year including 4 Congregational Suppers; accepted minister's recommendation to have Rev. Myron Kauffman visit on Jan. 22 to discuss church realignment plan; and accepted the responsibility to schedule and coordinate the Sunday Hostess Plan of the Church.

Nov. 20 - A Sunday morning Board meeting - No major business except the property committee report that vandals had broken windows in the church and stolen parts off, and articles from, members' cars while attending meetings. On behalf of the committee it was requested that the committee be empowered to have Vepco install two more pole lights for the parking areas. Motion made and carried.

1967

Jan. 18 - Official Board meeting included:

Minister reported his trip to the Holy Land would probably be made April 10th and during his 3 weeks absence, John Thompson, Presbyterian minister, would supply our pulpit. Stated that church activity was brisk.

Christian Education chairman, Dolores Harlan, reported that Sue Holland would be visiting on Tuesday, Feb. 7, for teacher training. Also reported youth meetings on one Sunday evening per month.

Property Committee reported possibility of new carpet in vestibule, phone in Educational Building, and installation of coat racks and shelf for Guest Book in Church Building. Mr. Belvin also moved installation of another watch light at N.W. corner of Educational Building. Motion passed.

Aug. 19 - At next regular Board meeting the chairman, Elijah Wilkerson, reported the names of functional committee chairmen and also stated that George and Alice Massay had been named delegates to the International Convention and invited anyone else who could go to contact him as the church is entitled to 3 delegates.

In the minister's report Rev. Massay expressed concern over the restructuring or reorganization of the Christian Churches. "This subject was a matter of considerable concern and discussion in the recent family vacation church school. Because the decisions taken with regard to this restructuring will have fundamental and long range effects upon congregations such as ours, a committee will be appointed this evening to study the proposals and after studying them to submit to the board and congregation suggestions as to changes in the restructure proposals." Same to be forwarded to the International Convention.

Sept. 20 - Board meeting consisted of regular reports including:

World Outreach - Catherine Ensley, Chairman, reported that a goal of \$4,478 accepted over a four year period was short \$311.30. Although the time period had passed she suggested that the remaining balance be paid. Motion made and carried.

Restructure Committee report by Chairman, Joe Smith, stated that the committee "discussed some of the problems that the Provisional Design raised in regards to Free and Traditional Local Autonomy. He then read a letter from the committee recommending many changes to the design."

A pamphlet, "The Atlanta Declaration" had been studied and generally agreed with by the committee. Mr. Smith then moved "that the Board recommend the proposed changes to the Provisional Design as set forth in the committee's statement, (or letter) and further ask the congregation to express sympathy with the problems and anxieties set forth in the Atlanta Declaration."

Objection was raised concerning the blanket acceptance of the "Atlanta Declaration" as it stated a desire to bring "an end to restructure". "Mrs. Myrtle Amory moved that Mr. Smith's motion be amended to delete the action called for on the Atlanta Declaration," this failed for want of a second and the original motion passed 10 for, none against and 9 not voting.

Sept. 24 - "A congregational meeting of the Grafton Christian Church was called to order at 7:15 p.m., Wednesday night, following a covered dish supper.

Committee on Restructure: Joe Smith reported on the meetings of this committee and expressed some of their attitudes, resulting from a comprehensive study of the Provisional Design. He then read a statement by the committee that offered many amendments to the design. In conclusion he placed the following motion, same being recommended by the Official Board: 'I move the Grafton Christian Church approve the proposed changes to the Provisional Design, as set forth in the committee's statement or letter and further ask the congregation to express sympathy with problems and anxieties set forth in the Atlanta Declaration;' upon being seconded the motion passed - 38 for - 1 against."

Oct. 2 - A loose letter in the record book from Rev. Myron Kauffman states his appreciation for our being one of the four churches in Virginia having taken the proposal seriously enough to act upon it. He further stated he did not know whether the report had been transmitted to the Commission or not, nor if transmitted whether it had been considered. If not so treated he suggested that Rev. Massay follow through on having it sent to the Commission.

#### 1968

Jan. 17 - During the regular meeting of the Board, "Bro. Massay gave a very informative summary of the role of the church in Today's River of Life. He cited many dangers, but expressed the thought that it was an exciting time to be alive; and further set forth the hope that locally we would work to be the church that would shun or ignore none, but welcome all."

Sept. 29 - At a congregational meeting the following reports were given:

"Christian Men's Fellowship - Roy Belvin reported that meetings had been well attended, and that the Fellowship had made a payment on the education building.

Mr. Mills advised that the adult class had contributed to the building fund in the amount of \$250."

Oct. 16 - "A report of the engineering survey work being conducted in the church cemetery by Mr. J. E. Thomas was made by him. A plat of the property and two plats of the cemetery were displayed. A motion was made by Mr. Thomas and seconded by Mr. Sasser

that burial fees for non-church members be changed from \$35 per grave to \$100 per grave. The increase was unanimously passed by the Board.

Also unanimously approved by the Board were the following eligibility rules governing burials in the church cemetery without fees: The candidate for burial shall

- (a) be a church member on the roll of the Grafton Christian Church or
- (b) if non-church member, shall be related to a member or
- (c) if non-church member shall be a descendant of a person buried in the cemetery."

Nov. 17 - Called meeting was held on Sunday at 12:10 p.m. "The purpose of the meeting was to hear a request by Mr. Massay to the Board for authorization to absent himself from the church for a period of two weeks during which time he would, in the company of his family, tour the Holy Land. Mr. Massay asked that he be permitted to utilize the balance (\$350) remaining in the fund for the minister's attendance of church conventions. A motion was made and seconded and unanimously approved by the Board whereby Brother Massay was wished God speed and a pleasant trip."

During the two Sundays that Mr. Massay would be away, the services of Mr. Larew and Rev. Thompson would be available as speakers at the morning worship services.

#### 1969

Jan. 22 - Completion of the engineering survey of the church cemetery was announced; also a continuing program of research and cross referencing of cemetery records was proposed. "With minor modification the cemetery regulations were unanimously approved by the Board."

April 16 - "The minister's report covering the period January 1 through March 31, 1969, was heard. Items noted of special interest to the Board and congregation were the proposed celebration of the 135th anniversary of the founding of the Grafton Christian Church which occurs on Sunday, May 11, and, regretfully, the resignation of our organist, Mrs. Hansford, effective at the end of May 1969."

#### 1970

April 15 - At a regular meeting of the Board the purchase of Curtis property was considered. A \$30,000 price had been quoted on the property, which consists of a lot directly across the road from the church, 425' deep and with a frontage on U. S. Route 17 of 195.51 ft. 40 church families would be asked to increase giving by \$2 per week. Remaining funding to be accomplished by addition of \$3,900 to church budget for the coming year.

May 3 - Interest charges would increase cost of property to \$36,000, with a further addition of projected bank loans to a total cost of \$40,000. Board voted in unanimous action to not purchase the Curtis property. Permission was granted to attempt to negotiate with Mr. Curtis purchase of the property directly across Brick Church Road for continued use as a parking lot. This was a called meeting.

May 31 - "A proposal, recently received, that a certain portion of the existing church property (part of the church plot) be made available for sale or trade was unanimously disapproved by the Board."

July 15 - "Dolores Harlan requested formal authorization for the use of the Educational Building on the third Wednesday of each month for the meetings of the county Senior Citizens Group. W. P. Larew moved such authorization be given. Motion seconded by George Cluverius and so ordered."

1971

July 21 - It was reported informally that discussion had ensued concerning purchase of approximately 3/4 of an acre of the Curtis property for a parking lot. A quorum not being present no action could be taken.

Sept. 26 - At the annual congregational meeting, O. Warren Redhair, worship committee chairman, made special note of our new organist, John Rappold.

Youth work had again improved with two age groups active.

"Welford and Dolores Harlan were appointed to officially represent Grafton Christian Church at the General Assembly to be held in October in Louisville, Kentucky." Catherine Ensley also attended.

1972

April 19 - "John Rappold, organist, will play his final service on May 21. He is to be drafted in U. S. Army."

A new type of bulletin was suggested because of objections to the lectionary on back of present ones. It was suggested a drawing of the church may be used on the cover.

Vandalism to cemetery cost \$150 to restore. 17 stones were overturned. Sheriff White has advised if we have any loose stones and someone is injured we are liable for negligence.

Oct. 18 - "Report of outreach committee was given by Leslie Dawson. He moved that third Sunday in January be set for congregation's participation in Reconciliation by designated offering. Motion was seconded by Les Halverson, motion carried."

1973

March 21 - At a Board meeting, "Mr. Rowell moved that we install central air conditioning in sanctuary, seconded by Ed Fox and motion passed. 3 ton units would be installed. \$3,600 written estimate is good until March 31."

April 8 - At a called meeting the congregation approved a loan up to \$5,000 for proposed improvements to the sanctuary - central air conditioning \$3,445; painting sanctuary and maintenance repairs to organ and speaker system approximately \$500. Balance of \$1,000 to be a contingency fund to cover possible increase over "bare-bone" estimates.

Sept. 24 - The committee to study restructure presented a report. "In this report the two outstanding objectional facts were:

1. There is far more organization required or desired with far too much control residing in the General and Executive Council.
2. There is a serious threat to local congregational autonomy as Disciples

have been able to practice it in the past."

A great deal of research supporting these objections was included in the committee's statement.

Oct. 17 - "Mr. Massay asked that he be given time to bring before the Board a matter which was of much concern to him, and felt that it was a grave concern to the congregation as a whole. Mr. Massay read a prepared statement to the Board expressing his personal views and feelings on the Christian marriage, and matters pertaining to divorce and re-marriage."

1974

Feb. 20 - Board approved purchase of new choir robes - 20 to be purchased at cost of \$600. Frazier fund may be used.

March 6 - "Frazier Fund Chairman George Cluverius recommended using that money to purchase new choir robes, with any balance of funds to be given to the cemetery fund; and requested the committee be then dissolved. His motion, seconded by Les Halverson, carried."

Bankers at First and Merchants made specific recommendations to establish trust fund for perpetual care of the cemetery.

Christian Education Committee report by Dolores Harlan indicated 18-20 young people attending youth meetings weekly. She moved acceptance of the committee's recommendation that the church install shuffleboard and pool table which are available from members of the congregation. Only expense would be repair and installation. Motion was seconded and carried.

March 31 - Proposed cemetery trust accepted.

May 1 - Trustees for the Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund appointed: Grayson Fox, Doris Haven, Welford Harlan, Linwood G. Burcher, John E. Thomas. Mr. Thomas' resignation as church trustee was accepted and Mr. Leslie Dawson chosen to replace him as church trustee.

June 9 - Congregation gave approval of Leslie Dawson's appointment as church trustee.

The young people of the church continued to enjoy experiences with district and state programs. After being a part of a conference at Craig Springs August 11-16, Anne Freeman's report on her experiences included, "I think I can speak for everyone who went in saying we had a great time and had lots of new experiences in that short week. And all of us would like to thank the church for helping to make our trip possible."

Sept. 29 - "Our church's representatives to the Quadrennial, Mrs. Kitty Ensley and Mrs. Dolores Harlan presented a report of their trip to Purdue, using slides to illustrate some highlights of that week."

1975

The action taken by the Board in May of 1974 was confirmed by court action in April of 1975.

April 22 - In the Circuit Court of the County of York - Appointment of Trustees of Grafton Christian Church Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund. Robert T. Armistead, Judge.

In the Circuit Court of the County of York -  
Appointment of Trustee of Grafton Christian  
Church - R. Leslie Dawson. Robert T.  
Armistead, Judge.

Sept. 17 - During regular board meeting, "Rev. Massay gave report of plans for observance of Bicentennial. The historic information sign (designed by Roy Belvin) will be part of the emphasis. Two union services are to be sponsored by 'dissenting' churches - one in old style of service with costumes, etc. One is to be contemporary in style. These services are sponsored by the York County Ministers Association. An outdoor service is tentatively scheduled for June 1976. The possibility of establishing a 'Renforth Room' was suggested. This would contain all articles of historic interest. Further suggestions were requested."

Sept. 28 - At a congregational meeting Harry N. Henry, Chairman of Property Committee, reported "Painted and rehabilitated nursery".

CWF had mother-daughter dinner in the Spring.

Ray Emery, President of CMF reported, "The major project for the year was clearing the wooded grove west of the lower parking lot entrance in preparation for developing this spot into a picnic area. Although weeds have grown up during the past summer, the project is intended to be completed eventually to provide picnic facilities for the use of the church and its friends."

Nov. 2 - "Ray Emery, property committee chairman, explained plans for renovating rooms in back of the sanctuary building to establish the Renforth Room. He stated purposes would be

(1) library (2) museum to hold and display items of this congregation's history (3) classroom for Campbell Class. The room is to be dedicated to memory of Mr. Renforth, who served as pastor for many years. It is hoped the room can be dedicated in February 1976 on Mrs. Renforth's 100th birthday."

#### 1976

April 21 - "The Renforth Room was completed on schedule and no loan appears necessary, because of good response in contributions."

Sept. 15 - Included in reports at the regular board meeting, "Catherine Ensley gave the report of the Outreach Committee. They would like to have outreach giving in excess of CWF giving. The committee met last week. They will publish an item weekly to let congregation know what is going on in outreach."

Sept. 26 - "Rev. George Massay gave the minister's report. He stated we are on the edge of big changes in our immediate environment. That is going to present us with some new problems, new challenges, and new opportunities."

#### 1977

Jan. 19 - "Mark Freeman will be a delegate, representing our district youth to the Virginia Youth Congress at Lynchburg, February 25-27.

Dolores Harlan suggested recognition of Myrtle Amory Green's contribution through years in choir should be given, perhaps

in form of resolution. L. K. Halverson appointed Dolores Harlan, Jan Emery, and Doris Barnes as committee to draw up resolution."

April 20 - Regular board meeting included a report on the purchase of 24 new hymnals through the worship committee.

"Outreach Chairman, Kitty Ensley, recommended a 1977-78 total budget amount the same as for 1976-77 for all items and no item over \$25 be paid until end of the year when payments would be made on a percentage basis; exception being certain designated gifts be paid as received."

Sept. 25 - Church band has been organized.

#### 1978

Feb. 15 - At a regular meeting of the board from the minister's report, "Today we have about 40 youth and adults away on a skiing trip sponsored by CYF".

"Motion made to limit flower pieces on funerals held in church to one arrangement on the casket and not more than four other arrangements around the casket. Motion made by John Thomas, seconded by G. F. Beasley, and carried."

April 19 - During regular board meeting it was announced by Rev. Massay that the Cabinet recommended the formation of a committee to plan improvements (beautification and restoration). "The president appointed a committee for beautification and restoration as follows: George Rowell, chairman, John Thomas, Maxine Moore, Dexter Haven, Kitty Ensley."

July 19 - Minister's report, "Another issue that is being raised and which our headquarters is asking the churches to study is the possibility of merging with United Church of Christ. Finally, there is the matter of what restructure means for local churches. Some of you will remember that as a congregation we studied the plan of restructure which was offered some years ago and made some recommendations as to how it could be better - Better meaning less authoritarian. I have suggested to the officers of the board that a committee be appointed to study these issues - homosexuality, merger with United Church of Christ, and our national and regional structures today and what it means for the local church - and that this committee report back to the board and the congregation. These issues are difficult and controversial. I suspect that they may lead to further divisions in our movement. Therefore, we must look at them very carefully."

A concrete sidewalk constructed from Spencers to the entrance of the church at a cost of approximately \$1,000.

Sept. 24 - At the annual congregational meeting an amendment to the constitution was presented, "that the Board Chairman shall ex officio be a member of all functional and special committees". The amendment was unanimously adopted.

Dec. 10 - "In answer to the question at the last board meeting about the function of the Memorial Beautification Committee and what type of committee, Mr. Rowell answered, that in his opinion, it is an advisory

committee, a special committee. It serves the board as long as the board wishes it to serve or its mission is complete."

Motion made to extend an invitation to our Regional Minister, Dr. Lewis McPherren, to meet with members of our congregation in evening meeting in January 1979.

"Joe Smith, chairman of the Denominational Relations and Study Committee, reported his committee had taken action to have a letter drafted to the General Board of the Christian Churches."

Another period of conflict was on the horizon for the Grafton congregation.

#### 1979

Feb. 18 - "The meeting was turned over to Joe Smith, Chairman of the Denominational Relations Committee, who read the attached proposed resolutions on Christianity and Marxism adopted by his committee." Resolution was adopted.

"Joe Smith asked the board's permission to mail the letter on homosexuality to the General Board of the Christian Church. Kitty Ensley so moved and Dexter Haven seconded. Motion carried."

"A congregational meeting of the Grafton Christian Church was held after worship immediately following the board meeting on February 18, 1979." The resolution concerning Marxism, was presented by Joe Smith. The motion carried with two opposing votes.

April 18 - Questions were reintroduced at this board meeting that had been asked during the previous meeting, concerning the actions of the committee appointed to study church merger and homosexuality but had gone beyond their designated realm to develop a resolution based primarily on objections to the study book, "China Speaks to Our Times". Also questioned was a called congregational meeting without the proper period of notification as required by the constitution.

The board chairman stated that he had been advised that congregational meetings were called without taking such request to the board.

Committee chairman responded that the committee had written the resolution as a guide to concerns before the proposed visit of the Regional Minister. "Had there been another committee that was active at that time it could have been referred to them. You can argue over which committee should handle this but it should be handled expediently."

Mr. Massay reported on his beliefs on communism and our missionary contributions.

Mrs. Myrtle Green asked to be recognized and read a letter from Dr. Teegarden, which said our leaders are not promoting communism. In answer to the question, "Are the Christian Churches, Disciples of Christ, losing interest in foreign missions", he heartily disagrees and stated, "we are witnessing in 62 countries and U. S. and Canada".

Welford Harlan made a motion that if there is any money left in the general fund at the end of June 1979 and Disciples Outreach did not meet their budget, he would like the General Fund to make up that deficit. Elsie Halverson seconded the motion. There were 9 votes in favor and 16 opposed. Motion was defeated.

July 18 - "Mr. Jack Herbener asked to be recognized to read a special report. He asked that the Board recommend money be transferred into the General Fund from the Building and Maintenance Fund to cover deficit. Mrs. Alleyne Burcher moved that the Board authorize the transfer of \$2,000 as a loan from the Building and Maintenance Fund to the General Fund with the understanding that if and when possible the money would be repaid. Mrs. Kitty Ensley seconded the motion. Mrs. Doris Barnes moved to amend the motion that the Board approve the transfer of funds as a loan with the understanding that this practice not be continued without approval of the Board. Mrs. Ann Sulzberger seconded this motion. The vote on the amendment proposed by Mrs. Barnes was 22 for and 9 opposed; amendment passed. Vote on the original motion by Mrs. Burcher was 26 for and 4 opposed. Motion approved as amended.

The Secretary read a letter and resolution from John Knibb, Jr., Pastor of Hampton Christian Church. Jack Herbener moved the Board endorse resolution as read and Frank Kelly seconded. The vote taken was 25 in favor, 10 opposed. Motion to endorse resolution passed." (Resolution Concerning Christianity and Communism)

"Les Halverson then read a letter dated May 18 from several congregation members addressed to Rev. Massay. Mr. Halverson

moved this letter be made part of the minutes of the official Board meeting. Mrs. Ann Sulzberger seconded. Vote taken was 9 in favor, 24 opposed. Motion defeated. A motion was made by Frank Kelly that we establish a grievance committee of at least two members, not more than 50% of which would be those who signed letter. Motion seconded by Les Halverson. In favor 8, opposed 20. Motion defeated." There were 43 present at this Board meeting.

### 1980

Feb. 24 - "Jack Herbener made a motion that the Resolution regarding N.C.C. statement on U. S. Criminal Justice System be offered to the Regional Assembly to be held at Lynchburg in May. Mrs. Alleyne Burcher seconded the motion. After discussion presented by Mr. Halverson and Mrs. Barnes the vote was taken with 18 in favor and 7 against. Motion passed.

George Rowell made a motion that the Resolution regarding support of Communism with funds given for Christian work likewise be submitted to the Regional Assembly. Leo Roach seconded the motion. Vote was 20 in favor and 7 against. Motion carried.

Mrs. Green expressed her views regarding her vote on the communism resolution."

Members had attempted to vocalize their concerns about the problems of the church and some felt that other means of expression should be adopted.

April 16 - Minister's report - "Some persons in this congregation who have objected to my

stands have cut off, I have been told, all support to the church and are sending all of their offerings to Indianapolis directly. This has not hurt as much as some people thought it would although it creates some problems. Mainly because of extremely high utility expenses, we are just barely managing to pay our bills. In my opinion we are faced with the absolute necessity of insulating our church buildings before the next heating season. In order to do this, some ways have to be found to cut our expenses. You will have noticed that there are no salary increases in the proposed budget and that there has indeed been roughly a 10% reduction in the general fund budget."

"Phil Walker made a motion that a letter dated April 16 from Mrs. Alma Sasser be brought before the Board. Motion was seconded by Welford Harlan. The vote was 14 in favor and 17 against. Motion defeated.

Welford Harlan made a motion that Mrs. Sasser's letter be forwarded to the Worship Committee. Les Halverson seconded the motion. Motion carried."

June 8 - At the annual congregational meeting nominations from the floor were submitted but the slate of officers was elected as presented by the nominating committee.

Earl L. Young was elected to Board of Trustees for Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund, replacing John E. Thomas, deceased.

W. Edward Fox was elected as Trustee, replacing Wray Lee Curtis, deceased.

"Grayson Fox made a motion that the proposed budget be accepted. Omar White seconded.

Ted Antoniewicz made a motion that the 1980-81 budget of Grafton Christian Church be amended to include an amount equal to that amount budgeted in 1979-80 for the custodian and church secretary and that Roy Belvin and Alice Massay respectively, be retained in those positions. Welford Harlan seconded. The vote was 39 in favor and 36 against. Motion carried."

A motion was made and seconded that \$4,500 be placed at the bottom of the list for an overall outreach goal. A motion was made and seconded to amend the foregoing motion to read that no money be taken from other items budgeted to meet the Outreach goal. It was questioned if Outreach money would be sent quarterly. The treasurer confirmed that it would. The amendment was then voted on and carried as was the original motion. The overall budget was then accepted as amended.

Sept. 28 - At the annual congregational meeting John N. Teague was elected Trustee replacing Maxine Moore, deceased. Court action on his appointment was taken on January 11, 1981. (Mrs. Maxine Moore had been elected Trustee on June 12, 1977 replacing Howard R. Burcher, deceased. She had been duly appointed by Circuit Court on September 11, 1980.)

Oct. 15 - At the regular board meeting the following reports were presented.

Minister's report, "I wish to state in this report, and I am quite pleased to be able to do this - that an organization called Christian Mission Awareness has been formed by members from four Disciple congregations - Hampton Christian; First Christian,

Fredericksburg; National City Church in Washington, DC and Grafton. The purpose of this group is to emphasize a traditional approach to Christian missions as set forth by Jesus in the Great Commission. . . ."

"Mrs. Linda Riggins reported on the Christian Education Committee's meeting and noted that it was agreed to use Standard Publishing Sunday School material for kindergarten through high school."

Announcement was made of the symposiums to be held in Roanoke and Richmond. Proposed dates were October 24 and 25, 1980. These were planned to give opportunity for those interested to hear explanations of concerns and air differences of opinions between Rev. Massay and a representative of the Division of Overseas Ministries.

Dec. 12 - Members of the congregation attended both of the symposiums. The following statement comes from the summary of the discussion held in Roanoke, Dec. 12, 1980, as presented by the "Observer", Herbert Hicks, minister of Bluefield Christian Church.

"Warren (the moderator) listed at the beginning two goals. One of them was the clarification of goals and policies of Division of Overseas Ministries. And the other was an expression of different opinions in reference to those goals and policies . . .

We seemed to imply that the issue was communism versus capitalism or concern versus indifference. Much of the time the communication was real, honest, and open. And what it revealed was fundamental and profound differences which will not easily go away. It is hard to characterize them but I will use the following dichotomies to do so as best I can:

conversion vs conversation  
denominational programs vs ecumenical programs  
distinct and unique Disciples of Christ witness as opposed to union."

The conflict within the church heightened with many seeking information from the regional and international offices of Disciples of Christ in order to better understand and evaluate the charges being made against individuals and the practices of various branches of the organized church. Through this challenge to seek the facts rather than listen to them interpreted by an individual, a number of people have become more deeply involved than ever in the regional and international work of Disciples. They find the work worthy of their complete support and where there are questions on procedures and activities they have learned where and to whom to turn to seek answers.

#### 1981

Jan. 21 - At a regular meeting of the board the following action ensued following the presentation of committee reports.

"Mrs. Green addressed the recommendation of the Outreach Committee to drop Reconciliation Sunday from the calendar until revolutionary causes are no longer supported with Reconciliation Funds. Discussion followed. Jack Herbener made a motion that the Board accept all other committee reports as read. George Rowell seconded. Bill Sulzberger made a motion to separate the Reconciliation recommendation from the rest of the Outreach Committee report. Mr. Smith seconded. That report was then accepted. Mr. Sulzberger made a motion to

delay decision in dropping Reconciliation Sunday until more information could be reviewed. Cheri Kelly seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Resolution Concerning Publicity on Reconciliation Funds was discussed. Bodee Riggins made a motion that we accept the resolution for proposal to both the General and Regional Boards. Motion was seconded by Jack Herbener. Motion carried with 14 in favor and 10 opposed.

Mrs. Ann Sulzberger read a letter of Report of the Minority of Grafton Christian Church. She announced that there would be a meeting in her home February 2 and invited interested persons to attend."

June 14 - At the annual congregational meeting, "Frank Kelly made a motion that we use secret ballots for all votes taken during the meeting. Elsie Halverson seconded the motion. Discussion followed. A show of hands indicated 45 in favor of secret ballots and 54 opposed. Motion defeated."

A motion was made and seconded "that we terminate Rev. Massay, without prejudice, effective after a 60 day notice. A vote showed 41 in favor of the motion, 60 opposed. The motion was defeated."

July 15 - During a regular meeting of the board, "Ann Sulzberger introduced a resolution honoring Alleyne Burcher, Wray Lee Curtis, Maxine Moore, and John Elliott Thomas for their contributions to the church. Mrs. Sulzberger moved that the resolution be incorporated in the minutes of the meeting and that a copy be sent to the families of the above named individuals. Joe Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried."

## 1982

Jan. 20 - In the course of the regular meeting of the board, letters were read from the York Senior Citizens and Elsie Halverson thanking the church for use of social hall for the past 11 years.

Sept. 15 - During the regular board meeting a question was raised as to "what had been done with the \$1,000 received by the church from the Harris estate. Mr. Massay stated it had been put in the General Fund.

The chairman read a letter from Norman Conners requesting George and Alice Massay attend a meeting of the Continuing Christian Church Mission to be held in California November 1-3, 1982. Mr. and Mrs. Massay will travel at their own expense. Joe Smith moved that Mr. and Mrs. Massay represent Grafton Christian Church at the meeting. Jack Herbener seconded. Motion carried."

## 1983

Jan. 13 - At a board meeting, "In his report Mr. Massay stated that he and Mrs. Massay had been invited to attend two conferences. The first, The Institute on Religion and Democracy's Conference on the subject of Bread and Freedom to be held February 17 and 18 in Washington, D.C. The second is a conference for leaders of renewal groups to be held in Chicago on March 14 and 15. Mr. Massay requested that he be allowed to use some of the money in the budget for conventions and conferences to help pay for the cost of the trips. Lee Raybourn moved that the Massays be allocated up to \$800 for this purpose. Jack Herbener seconded. Motion passed."

Stewardship Committee recommended the congregation be made aware of need to repair roof on the sanctuary and replace the roof on education building and parish and to contribute by specifying "Roofing Fund" on the Building and Maintenance envelopes.

"Linda Riggins reported for the Christian Education Committee. The committee requested \$100 to purchase attendance pins. Joe Smith so moved. Wayne Schell seconded. Motion passed."

Deed to property given to church by Hazel and Carrie Curtis presented.

"Leo Roach reporting for the Worship Committee stated that Jim Massay wished to be ordained into the Christian ministry on April 24 in the sanctuary. Mr. Roach moved that the board give its permission. John Teague seconded. Motion passed."

"Mr. Massay submitted a proposed resolution on Human Rights and Ecumenical Projects. He asked for a motion that the resolution be approved, mailed to the 200 members of the national general board of the Disciples and submitted to the General Assembly of the Christian Church meeting in San Antonio, Texas in September. Jack Herbener so moved. Harold Williams seconded. After lengthy discussion, the motion passed."

April 20 - At a regular meeting of the board, "Mr. Massay requested that he be allowed to use some of the conference expense money to attend a conference on the question "Who Speaks for the Churches" sponsored by the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington on April 21 and 22." Request granted.

June 12 - Jimmy Collins was appointed to Board of Trustees for Cemetery Perpetual Care, effective July 1, 1983 replacing Welford F. Harlan, whose term expires.

July 20 - At this board meeting Doris Barnes and Penny Cook were chosen as delegates to the General Assembly in San Antonio. Our church can only have two delegates.

Oct. 19 - At the regular meeting of the board it was announced that "Mrs. Renforth (Jr.) donated the money for completion of the brick wall. The church will purchase a plaque to be put on the wall in commemoration."

#### 1984

Jan. 18 - During reports presented at the board meeting the following information was given, "The brick wall will cost more than originally planned and the property committee will pick up the difference."

"A report on the Church Survey was given by Omar White. The Church has approximately 10½ acres in five separate plots. The current description is insufficient and he recommended a new survey be conducted with a consolidated survey to be put on record at the courthouse. He will pay for 2/3 of the cost. A motion was made for the Church to pay the other third, and the motion was seconded and passed unanimously."

"The Worship Committee report was given by Bodee Riggins. He reported the organist had resigned. The Elders are going to have a meeting to discuss taking communion to the elderly people who are unable to come

to church. At that meeting the Elders will also discuss their responsibilities and if there is a ceremony for installing deacons and deaconesses."

Speakers for 150th celebration were announced. Jim Massay will speak at the morning worship service and Dr. McAllister will speak at the 4:00 p.m. service.

As the records to date are closed and this history of the Church goes to print the conflict has not been resolved, but as has always been true, the fellowship of the Church is sufficient to ride the tides of change. The work of the Church will be renewed and its witness to God's work strengthened as the differences are resolved.

"For we know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose."  
Romans 8:28

#### PASTORS OF GRAFTON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

1834 - 1837	Kemp P. Elliott
1837 - 1844	John Curtis
1850 - 1856	G. W. Abell
1861	E. T. Wynne
1857 - 1876	H. H. Wynne
	F. D. Power
1881 - 1890	W. C. Wade
1890	Geo. F. McGee
1891	J. M. Helm
1892	R. H. Wynne
	I. L. Chestnutt
	Dr. Glassock
	C. E. Elmore
	F. W. Troy
1906 - 1945	A. J. Renforth
1943	Jesse Simoson (Summer)
1945	Frank Johnson (Summer)
1946 - 1947	Aubrey Russell
1947 - 1951	Willard W. Jones
1951 - 1958	Robert B. Marriott
1958 - 1962	David C. Derby
1962 -	George E. Massay